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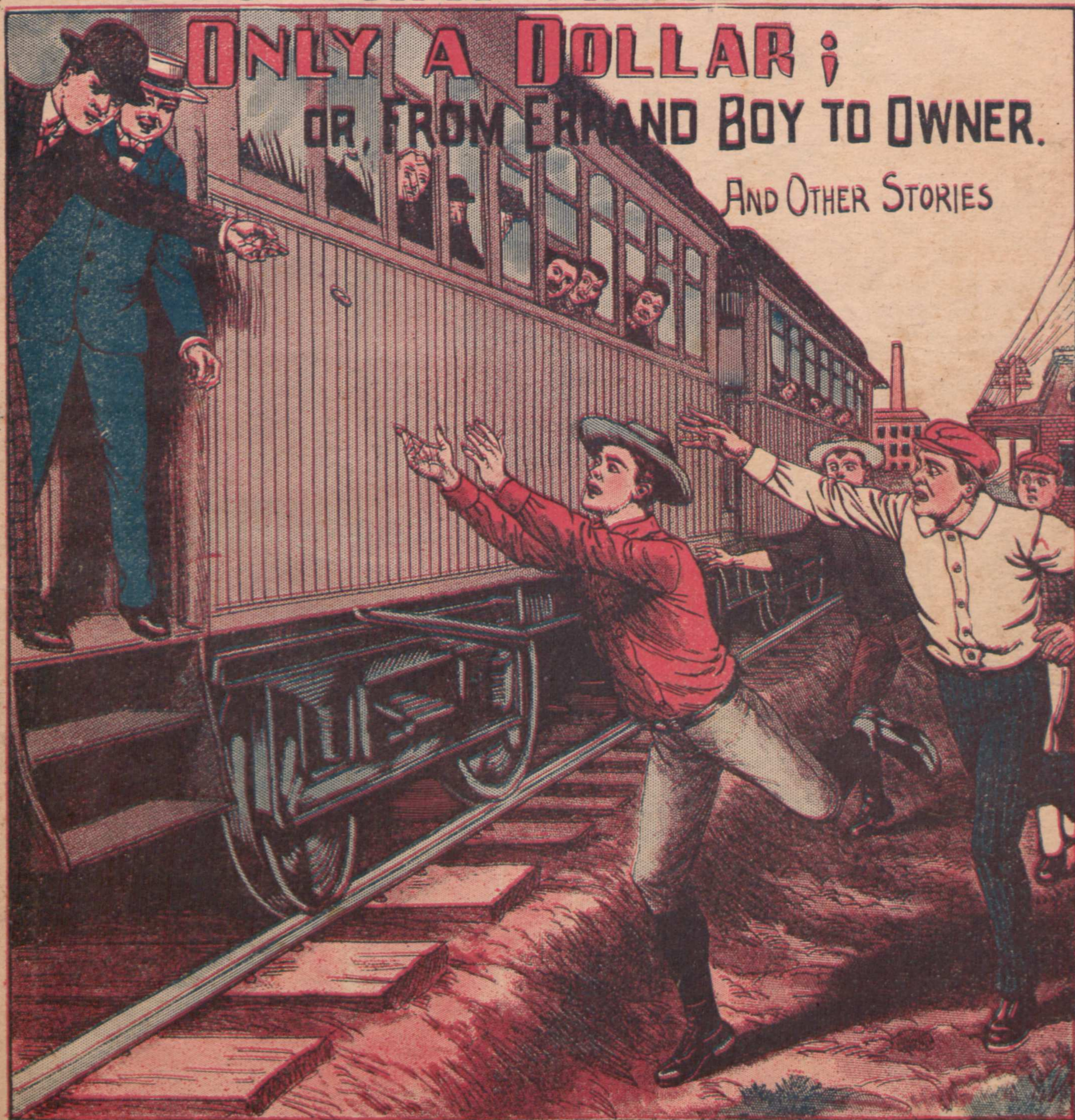
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# FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF  
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

ONLY A DOLLAR;  
OR, FROM ERRAND BOY TO OWNER.

AND OTHER STORIES



Fred Towne now darted ahead of the bunch, closely followed by Ferguson. Straining every nerve he succeeded in keeping abreast of the car platform for the required distance. "You've won!" laughed the tourist, tossing the coin into his outstretched hands.







# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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Price 5 Cents.

## ONLY A DOLLAR

—OR—

### FROM ERRAND BOY TO OWNER

#### BY A SELF-MADE MAN

##### CHAPTER I.

##### TROUBLE IN A PRINTING OFFICE.

Crash!

The half dozen employees of Peter Koop's printing establishment on Main street, Leesburg, looked up in a startled way to find Fred Towne, errand boy, struggling with the ruins of a foundry form on the floor which a stone-hand had sent him to fetch.

The cause of the disaster was a banana peel dexterously placed in Fred's path by Jude Ferguson, an apprentice, who had a mania for mischief in general and a personal grouch against Towne in particular.

"Now you've done it!" chuckled Jude, as pleased as a mud lark at low tide. "The foreman won't do a thing to you! That was a 'live' form, and I was goin' to take it to the foundry as soon as Benson had made a correction in it."

It was hardly necessary to remind Fred that the damage was a serious one.

The revised proof of the form had just come in, with a solitary and unimportant correction marked on it, and Foreman Gregg had written the word "Rush" in blue pencil across one corner of the sheet.

The "Rush" was intended for the instruction of the foundry—that the plate was wanted as soon as possible.

As Fred was picking himself up, and regarding the wreck with a rueful face, the foreman came over to see what had happened.

When he saw that the foundry form he was in such a sweat over was irretrievably "pied," his brow grew as black as a thunder-gust.

We won't repeat what he said as he glared at the unfortunate boy.

Any one who has worked under the average job printing foreman knows that the responsibilities of his position doesn't improve his temper, and he is apt to speak to the point when things go wrong.

Foreman Jim Gregg was red-headed and more than ordinarily quick-tempered.

Furthermore, he was Jude Ferguson's brother-in-law.

Jude was always carrying some story to him about Fred which inflamed the natural dislike he entertained against the errand boy.

He would have fired Fred long before only that he found him uncommonly useful, much smarter at the business than Jude, who was naturally lazy, and shirked his work whenever he could.

Jude was a year older and had been a year longer in the printing office than Towne, but he didn't know half as much about the "art preservative."

Fred was a natural born printer, and took to the trade like a duck to water; Jude hated the business, as he would have hated any business, for that matter, because there was work attached to it.

Consequently, Jude learned the "rudiments" very slowly, and his brother-in-law was forever calling him down about something or another.

Jude didn't care for that as long as the pay envelope came his way every Saturday afternoon, and there were no deductions taken out for tardiness.

The employees of Peter Koop worked from 7.30 a. m. to 6 p. m.—ten hours.

The nine-hour law was in effect, then, in union as well as the more important "open shops," but it wasn't in operation in Leesburg.

In any event, Mr. Koop wasn't in favor of the shorter work day.

He paid his workmen as little as he could and got as much out of them for the money as he could.

His "time-slips" compelled the men to account for every five minutes.

When these had passed under the eagle eye of the foreman every morning and had been turned into the office, Mr. Koop examined them himself, and he usually had something to say to the foreman afterward which didn't make Gregg feel any happier.

The only way Gregg could ease his ruffled mind was to call the man or men down, though he knew, having passed the slips himself, that they were not guilty.

From a business point of view, Gregg was a good foreman; you couldn't fool him worth a cent.

He knew how a job ought to be set, and he could tell at a glance from the proof about the time required to put it together.

Nevertheless, he wasn't popular with any one but the boss.

Neither was Jude Ferguson—the men hated him, and with good reason, for he was always snooping around and carrying information to his brother-in-law.

Fred Towne, on the contrary, was a first favorite.

Probably that was the chief reason why neither Jude nor Gregg liked him.

Fred knew where every type in the office was to be found; Jude never, or at least very seldom, could find a case when he had a piece of copy to work on.

When there was a rush, the foreman frequently sent Fred to help a journeyman on the "straight matter."

If the copy was "reprint," the workman let him set a part of the "display," and he never failed to do it well—so well, in fact, that the men often trusted him with written copy having displayed lines in it.

Gregg had noticed him doing work sometimes not expected of him, and in this way got a line on his evident ability.

Therefore, he found him too valuable to discharge merely for personal motives.

He found it more profitable to vent his grouch against the boy by lashing him with his tongue.

Fred being an orphan, and compelled to work for his keep, had to put up with his talk.



He was always cheerful under strenuous circumstances, and the men admired his good temper and grit.

They would have taught him the road to good fellowship via the bar of their favorite saloon, only Fred wouldn't drink nor smoke.

He had promised his dying mother never to do either, and he had the strength of will to keep his word.

Besides, he had plenty of opportunity to see the effects of too much drink.

It frequently made driveling idiots of smart typos of a Saturday night.

He also discovered that some of the best compositors in town were the greatest lushers.

Just why this should be he couldn't determine, but the fact was not to be gainsaid.

Gregg knew it, too, for he had been there himself, but had reformed.

"Can't you look where you're putting your feet, Towne?" roared the foreman, kicking the offending banana peel under a frame. "Get a paper and gather up that pi. You can distribute it after you eat your lunch."

He snatched the revised proof from the boy's hand, and put a couple of men at resetting the job in a hurry.

"Better get a shovel," snickered Jude to Fred.

"I suppose you didn't throw that banana peel in my way?" said Fred, looking hard at Ferguson.

"Me? Of course not. Why should I do it?"

"I saw you eating a banana a moment ago."

"What of it? You didn't see me throw no skin down on the floor."

"No. But you might have done it, just the same."

"Oh, rats! Get a broom and sweep up the mess. If you wasn't a hamfatter at the business you wouldn't have pied the form. You never seen me do anythin' like that?"

"Yes, I have. I've seen you pi a case of type several times."

"You're dreamin'. I kin handle a case of type better'n you."

Fred took no further notice of his enemy, but went and got a piece of newspaper and threw the type in it.

Then he placed the furniture and foundry bearers in their places, and put the patent quoins in a drawer.

He laid the pi on a convenient window sill until he was ready to distribute it.

The stone-hand who had been ready to correct the demolished form came over to him and said:

"I saw Ferguson throw that peel under your feet. You ought to give him a calling-down about it. If he worked such a funny game on me, I wouldn't leave anything larger than a grease spot of him."

"What's the use of calling him down?" replied Fred. "It wouldn't do any good. One of these days I'll forget myself, and then there'll be something doing in his direction. I don't believe in scrapping, but there's a limit to everything. I suppose if I went for him Gregg would bounce me, and I can't afford to lose my job."

"I don't believe you'd lose it; but if you did, the boys would stand by you."

"How would they?"

"They'd either quit work till you were taken back, or they'd chip in and make a pot so you wouldn't starve while looking for another place."

Fred believed him, for he knew that, whatever might be their faults, printers are, as a rule, always ready to help out a fellow workman when they believe he's deserving of their sympathy.

"I don't mean to be the cause of any inconvenience to the men," said Fred.

At that moment the foreman called him to strike off a couple of proofs on the proof-press, and he hurried away.

The stone-hand slipped into one of the alleys and told two of the jobbers the cause of the accident, and in five minutes even Gregg knew that Jude was at the bottom of the recent trouble.

## CHAPTER II.

### JUDE FERGUSON IN TROUBLE.

It was early in the summer and there was plenty of light after six o'clock when work ceased in Keep's printing office.

All hands took off their aprons, completed the making out of their time-slips, and then hung them on a hook beside the foreman's desk, which was perched on an elevated platform at one side of the room.

The presses in operation were stopped about fifteen minutes before quitting time in order to allow time for washing rollers, etc.

As the hands passed out they rang up their numbers on the time clock, and the overworked bookkeeper came in afterward, abstracted the sheet, and substituted a fresh one to receive the morning impressions.

Some of the printers and pressmen made a bee-line for the saloon on the corner, but the majority went home, glad that the day's work was over.

Fred Towne lived at the humble home of a railroad man employed in the freight yards of the Leesburg & Western Railroad, not far away.

The man's name was Valentine, and he had a sixteen-year-old daughter named Eva, who was very partial to the young boarder.

She admired Fred not only because he was a good-looking boy, but because he was manly and straightforward.

She was a very pretty girl herself, vivacious and even-tempered.

Fred thought her an uncommon nice girl, and they were as thick as two peas in a pod.

Mrs. Valentine had taken a great liking for the boy, in common with her husband, and had such confidence in him that she permitted Eva to go anywhere with him—a privilege accorded to no one else, for the good woman kept a watchful eye over her only daughter.

She felt assured that Fred would protect Eva under any and all circumstances, as though he were her brother.

And she was right.

As Fred was on his way to the Valentine home that afternoon several of the compositors detained him in front of the saloon for about ten minutes to speak about the incident of the pied foundry form.

They denounced the affair as a scurvy trick of Ferguson's, and were of the unanimous opinion that Towne ought to take it out of Jude's hide at the first chance he got.

Fred finally got away from them and continued on his way.

His friend Tom Benedict, who was an advanced apprentice in the Koop office, and Jude also lived in the neighborhood of the railroad yard and the Valentine cottage.

Usually Fred walked home with Tom, but this occasion was an exception.

As he approached a corner grocery within a block of the cottage, he spied Eva Valentine coming out of the store with a jug in her hand.

As she started toward her home, Jude Ferguson, whom she was acquainted with but didn't like even a little bit, suddenly made his appearance from around the corner and confronted her with a smirk on his freckled countenance.

"Goin' home, Eva?" he said. "I'll walk with you."

"You needn't trouble yourself," she answered tartly.

"Why not? Ain't I good enough for you to walk with?"

"I prefer walking by myself."

"You wouldn't say that if Fred Towne came along," he said crustily, for he liked Eva and was jealous of Fred, another reason for disliking his shop-mate.

"Oh, Fred is a privileged person. He lives with us."

"What if he does. That doesn't give him the exclusive privilege to walk with you. I want a chance once in a while myself."

"And suppose I don't want you to?" she replied, saucily.

"Why don't you want me to?"

"I have my reasons."

"What are your reasons?" persisted Jude, preventing her from going on.

"I'm not obliged to tell them if I don't want to," she replied, independently. "Let me pass."

"I'm goin' to walk with you, anyway," said Jude, following her up.

"No, you're not," she said, making a move to cross the street.

He kept close at her side, however, and she got angry.

"I don't want you to follow me," she flashed.

"I'm goin' to walk right along with you just because you say I mustn't. I like you, and—"

"Well, I don't like you. So there!"

"I s'pose you like Fred Towne, don't you?" he sneered.

"Yes, I do. Now are you satisfied?"

"No, I'm not. If you don't let me walk along with you, I'll punch his face when I see him again. I kin lick him with my eyes shut, and I'll do it, too."

Fred heard his last remark very clearly, for he was now close at hand, although unperceived by either Jude or Eva.

Jude's words nettled him, and his attitude toward Eva



didn't soften his feelings toward Ferguson, so he stepped up and said quietly:

"So you can whip me with your eyes shut, can you, Ferguson? Well, you've the opportunity to make good now, if you want to."

Eva and Jude turned quickly around.

The girl, with a pleased look, stepped quickly to his side, while Ferguson glared furiously at the boy he hated.

As Jude made no effort to carry out his threat, Fred gave his attention to Eva.

"Where have you been? To the grocery?"

"Yes."

"Well, you're bound home, I guess, so come on."

They walked off together, leaving Jude gazing after them with a malignant expression in his eyes.

"I'll fix you, Fred Towne!" he muttered. "I'll get you bounced from the shop, see if I don't. Yah! How I hate you!"

He followed on some distance behind Fred and Eva, for he lived two blocks beyond the Valentine cottage, on the same street.

Jude tried to get his brother-in-law to discharge Fred next day, which was Saturday, but Gregg laughed at him, and Jude was intensely disappointed.

The only way he saw of revenging himself on Fred was to annoy him, for, though bigger and apparently stronger, he did not have the sand to invite a personal encounter.

On the following Monday, as Fred was picking up a handful of type from one of the stones to distribute, Jude jostled his arm and the type went to pi.

Fred sprang around, but Ferguson glided away quickly and took up something to do close to his brother-in-law, and so Fred was checkmated for the time being.

Later on, when Fred was passing a big sixteen-page pamphlet form of solid type, which had been brought from the pressroom and stood up against the end of a frame, Jude tried to trip up Towne so that he'd fall against it with force sufficient to cause it to spring enough to bring about a wholesale case of pi.

He failed, however, and got a slap across the jaw for his pains.

As he backed away a press feeder fetched him a sly kick in the rear, and, turning upon his fresh aggressor, he struck his head against the corner of a case and uttered a howl that focussed Gregg's attention on him.

"I'll get square with you," he snarled, looking at Fred as though he was the cause of his trouble.

Fred laughed and walked on.

Then Jude turned on the pressman.

"What did you kick me for?"

"Who kicked you?"

"You did, you big stiff!"

"Oh, forget it!" replied the man, walking off.

Jude was mad enough to chew a ten-penny nail.

"Here, Jude," shouted Gregg, "give Ogden a lift with that form."

If there was one thing Ferguson hated, it was to assist in hoisting a big chase full of type onto a stone.

But he had to obey when ordered by the foreman, and he started in to do it very grudgingly indeed.

He went so awkwardly about the job that he caught one of his fingers between the iron chase and the wooden rim of the stone.

He howled murder and let go of the chase.

His end went down like a flash of light, denting a hole in the floor, and then fell over on its face, dragging Ogden with it.

Fortunately, the iron quoins held all, despite the jar, and the form was saved.

Gregg was so mad, though, that he collared his brother-in-law, and, unmindful of the relationship, booted him twice.

Jude grabbed a mallet and made a motion as if to throw it at Gregg.

The foreman seized his uplifted arm and ordered him out of the office.

He went, but he was back next day, having patched the difficulty up.

His discomfiture, however, was a source of great satisfaction to the men.

A small pamphlet bindery, employing half a dozen girls, was attached to the Koop printing office.

Jude used to go in there and talk to the girls during lunch time.

He soon made himself so disliked there that none of the girls would have anything to say to him any more.

This riled him, and he began playing tricks on them to get square.

One of the girls reported him, and Gregg ordered him to stay out of the bindery.

Discovering which girl had told on him, he decided to be revenged on her.

He found that the girl, whose name was Edith Clark, brought her lunch in a small box and left it on a shelf.

So he got a similar box, enclosed a live mouse with enough of miscellaneous stuff to weight it so as to deceive the girl when she handled it, and then watching his chance, changed the boxes.

When noon came and Miss Clark opened the box, the mouse sprang at her.

She promptly fainted and pandemonium ensued in the bindery.

Fred happened to be in there at the time, for the girls liked to talk to him, and he stopped the panic by chasing the mouse.

While the other girls were resuscitating the unconscious girl, Fred examined the box, saw Jude's name inside, and judged he was the author of the trouble.

If he had needed any further proof, Ferguson's grinning countenance at the open doorway would have furnished it.

He sprang suddenly on the young rascal, and before he could escape caught him by the ear and marched him into the bindery.

By this time Miss Clark had come out of her faint.

Fred explained the case against Jude, the box was looked at, and he was pronounced guilty by the girls.

"Get down on your knees and apologize," ordered Fred.

"I will, like fun!" snarled Ferguson. "Let go my ear, will you?"

"Not until you've begged Miss Clark's pardon."

"I'll die first," roared Jude.

At that moment Tom Benedict appeared.

Edith Clark was his best girl.

"What's the trouble?" he wanted to know.

Fred explained the situation.

Then Tom took a hand in the matter, and Jude found it convenient to beg the girl's pardon very humbly.

When they released him he shook his fist at Fred and threatened dire vengeance on him, and there wasn't any doubt but he meant what he said.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ONLY A DOLLAR.

Ferguson associated with a rough crowd of boys who had formed themselves into an organization called "The Night Hawks."

The name was appropriate because they met only at night in an old house on the outskirts of the town, and they seldom returned to their homes until long after midnight.

Jude was not an especial favorite with them, but he was a member of the gang, and that counted so far as enlisting their sympathies in his behalf.

Having woke up to the fact that he couldn't injure Fred Towne much in the way he had counted on, he took counsel with the gang.

They advised him to say nothing for a while until some scheme could be hatched up against Towne that promised success.

Accordingly, Ferguson quit playing tricks on his enemy in the printing office, and Fred imagined that Jude had learned a salutary lesson.

That was where he deceived himself.

On the Saturday afternoon following the bindery incident Fred and Tom left the office at five o'clock, which was the hour the shop shut down on that day, and started for the railroad station to see the Pacific Express come in and depart.

Ferguson, and a crony of his named Morton, followed on behind them.

The four boys seated themselves on a pile of sleepers between the two tracks opposite the station, and waited for the train to come in.

Fred and Tom paid no attention to Jude and his companion Morton, and conversed by themselves.

They were talking over a trolley trip they had arranged to take the next day with Eva Valentine and Edith Clark, who had already consented to accompany them.

Jude was listening to them, and occasionally nudging his associate, and then whispering a word or two in his ear.



Presently the long-drawn-out whistle of the express sounded down the line, and the boys turned their faces in that direction.

All they could see was the front of the locomotive coming down upon them like some steel-clad monster belching a thin vapor from its nostrils.

They could hear the clickety-clack of the ponderous wheels singing along the rails, and the low hum of the drivers swelling gradually into a roar as the long train, with the air brakes set, dashed up alongside the station and came to a rest.

The connecting platforms of two Pullman sleepers stood in front of the four boys, and a couple of smart-looking young tourists were standing with their backs against the car, talking and smoking cigarettes.

They soon noticed the boys seated on the sleepers and began to chaff them.

Finally one of them put his hand in his pocket and drew out a big, shining new silver coin.

"Do you see this dollar?" he asked, with a broad grin.

"Sure we see it," replied Fred.

"Goin' to let us scramble for it?" asked Jude, springing up eagerly.

"You are going to run a race for it."

"Where do we have to run to to get it?" inquired Ferguson.

"When the train starts," explained the tourist, "you boys must start, too, and try to keep up with the platform of this car. The chap who heads the race as far as yonder switch gets the dollar. Are you on?"

"Bet your life we are," chorused the boys.

"Line up, then," said the young tourist.

Word of the impending race was conveyed through the two Pullmans, and the passengers began sticking their heads out of the windows to watch the contest, which aroused great interest and amusement.

At that moment the conductor on the platform cried "All aboard!" and waved the usual signal to the engineer.

As the train pulled out the race began, first at a jog trot and then at a more rapid pace.

As the cars gathered headway the boys began to spurt, for the prize was eagerly desired by each.

The tourists encouraged the runners in every way they could, while their eyes sparkled with fun.

Some of the passengers began to cheer, the ladies waving their handkerchiefs.

More heads popped out of the other cars, for the people aboard got wind that something out of the usual was going on.

Fred Towne now darted ahead of the bunch, closely followed by Ferguson.

Straining every nerve, he succeeded in keeping abreast of the car platform for the required distance.

"You've won!" laughed the tourist, tossing the coin into his outstretched hands.

Then the long train swept by, the passengers giving the boys a parting cheer.

Fred gripped the shiny dollar in one hand as he slowed down.

Jude was furious with disappointment.

He had fully calculated on winning the money himself, for he was a good runner.

There wasn't any doubt but that it had been a fair race, and that the winner was the fleetest of the party.

That fact, however, didn't console Jude.

He wanted the dollar, and besides it was gall and wormwood to him to see Fred, especially, win the money.

"I ought to have half that prize," he snarled, with angry eyes.

"What for? I won it, didn't I?" retorted Towne.

"We were both even when he pitched you the money."

"Bosh!" interjected Tom Benedict. "You were two feet behind Fred."

"That's a lie! I wasn't. I'll leave it to Morton."

"How could he tell?" said Tom. "He was way behind when you two finished."

"So was you behind," growled Jude.

"I was almost up to you. I could have touched you with my hand, but I couldn't have reached Fred nohow."

"You say that 'cause you're his friend."

"I say it because it's the truth. I know what I'm talking about."

"You don't know nothin'," snorted Jude.

"Well, the chap who offered the money tossed it to Fred and said he'd won. He was the judge of the race, and what he said goes."

Ferguson couldn't go behind that, so with a nasty look at Fred and Tom he drew off with Morton, and they jumped the fence and walked toward the street beyond.

"Jude will hate you worse than ever after this," chuckled Tom Benedict.

"That doesn't worry me any," replied Fred. "There never has been any love lost between us. I don't fancy fellows of his stamp, anyway."

"Well, you're a lucky boy. You'll have a whole dollar to spend to-morrow."

"No, I won't."

"Why not? Got any special use for that dollar you won?"

"Yes. It's the only dollar I have ever owned in the world, and I'm going to keep it as a lucky piece. I've an idea that as long as I hold onto it I'll get more."

"What put that into your head?"

"I couldn't tell you. But I feel it in my bones."

"Then I'd freeze onto it if I felt that way."

"I mean to."

"Maybe Mr. Koop will give you a raise in your pay."

"Don't you believe it. It's like drawing a tooth to get a raise out of him."

"I believe you. I'm a two-thirder, but I don't get two-thirds of a journeyman's wages."

"You ought to, for you are worth it."

"That's right. And you're worth more than \$4. Jude gets \$6, and you can set type all around him. Besides, there are a lot of things you can do that he couldn't tackle to save his life, and he's been a year longer at the business."

"He'll never be worth his salt as a printer—he's too lazy and careless."

"He'll never be worth his salt at anything if he don't mend his ways."

"He wouldn't last under Gregg if they weren't related."

"Nor under any other foreman."

They walked back to the station and then started for home.

Fred pulled the silver prize he had won out of his pocket and looked at it.

It felt good to own that much—a whole hundred cents' worth.

"Only a dollar," he said. "When will I have another to match it?"

"That's a conundrum, I guess," laughed Tom. "Silver dollars, or paper ones, either, are not growing on bushes for people to pluck."

"That's right—they aren't. If they were——"

"Nobody would work. Neither are they lying around in the road for folks to stumble over."

"That's right, too. Hello! what's that?"

"What's that?"

Fred made a swoop at something in the gutter.

When he straightened up he held a dirty, greenish bit of paper in his fingers.

Many people had no doubt passed that way within the last hour or two, yet had not seen it.

It was a bank bill worth 50.

"Great scissors!" exclaimed Tom. "A fifty-dollar bill!"

Fred gazed at the note with open mouth and eyes.

The bright new dollar in his other hand faded into insignificance before this old dirt-begrimed piece of faded green paper.

"Talk about luck," continued Tom, "it's coming your way by the raftful. I never found anything larger than a nickel in my life, and that was so smooth that I had a lot of trouble passing it."

"Somebody must have lost this," said Fred.

"That's evident. People don't usually plant fifty-dollar bills in the gutter for somebody else to pick up and blow in."

"I wonder if I could find out who lost it?"

"Are you anxious to find the owner?" asked Tom in surprise.

"Fifty dollars is a lot of money," replied Fred, solemnly.

"You're right, it is."

"The person who lost it might not be able to afford it."

"That isn't your funeral."

"If I knew who that person was I'd——"

"Return it, eh?" laughed Tom, incredulously.

"I certainly would."

"You'd be a ——"



"Would you keep this money, Tom, if you could find the owner?"

"No; but I wouldn't go around town asking people if they'd lost it."

"Of course, you couldn't do that; but it might be advertised for."

"Go on! It would be a waste of good money to advertise for a lost bill. How could money be identified?"

"This bill could."

"How?"

"By the red Maltese cross on the back, and the fact that it's been torn and pasted together."

"Ho! That don't count for much."

"I think it counts for a good deal."

"What are you going to do? Keep the bill for a while on the possibility that the owner might show up?" asked Tom, wondering.

"Yes."

"Say, you're a phenomenon, Fred. The owner will never show up if you keep the bill for a hundred years."

"I haven't any particular need to spend the money at present, so I might as well keep it intact."

"You can do that, of course. You can use the silver dollar."

Fred shook his head.

"I'll change the fifty before I do that. If it hadn't been for the dollar I shouldn't have found the bill. I told you I believed it would bring me luck, and you see it has."

"I wouldn't swear to it," replied Tom, doubtfully.

"Well, that's my opinion," replied Fred, in a positive tone, as they came to a stop in front of the Valentine cottage.

"All right, old chap, have it your own way," answered Tom. "I hope you'll find some more on the strength of it. Good-by. I'll see you in the morning."

Tom went on his way and Fred entered the house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE OLD MILL AT PLAINVILLE.

Supper was nearly ready when Fred entered the combined sitting- and dining-room.

Eva was setting the table, for it was almost time for her father to get home.

"What do you suppose we've got for supper to-night, Fred?" she asked the young printer.

"I'm not good at guessing riddles, Eva," he replied.

"It's something you like."

"Is it? That makes it harder to guess, for I like most anything that tastes good," he laughed.

"But you like this particularly."

"Then it must be pork and beans."

"That's just what it is."

"Then I'm right in it. In fact, I've been right in it since I left the office."

"How is that?"

"In the first place, four of us—Tom Benedict, Jude Ferguson, Slatts Morton and me—ran a race in the yard with the Pacific Express for a dollar, and I won the money."

"You ran a race with the Pacific Express!" exclaimed Eva, opening her pretty eyes. "Why, how could you do that?"

Fred told her all about the incident.

"My, that must have been fun!" she cried.

"It was, for everybody concerned. And it was profitable for me. There's the dollar. Look at it. Doesn't it shine?"

"It's a new one."

"That's what it is. Well, as Tom and I were coming up the road, what do you suppose I found?"

"I'll never guess," she answered, shaking her head.

"A fifty dollar bill."

"You don't say!" she ejaculated in astonishment.

"Well," said Fred, bringing forth the dirty, mutilated and cross-marked bill, "is that fifty dollars or isn't it?"

Eva had to admit that it was when she looked at it.

"My goodness! Aren't you fortunate?"

"Yes, I think I am," admitted Fred.

"Whereabouts in the road did you find it?"

"In the gutter, not far from the grocery."

"You're rich, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm worth fifty-one dollars at the present moment, if no one claims the bill."

"How could any one claim it?"

"I couldn't say. The possibility is small, I suppose."

"I should think so. There isn't one chance in a thousand." "I hope I'm honest enough to give it up if the owner did turn up."

"I'm sure you are; but you needn't worry. No one will ever claim that bill."

Eva finished setting the table, and in a few minutes her father came in.

Supper was put on the table and all sat down to it.

Before the meal was over Fred related how he had come into possession of the fifty-one dollars.

Mr. Valentine congratulated him on his luck and asked him what he was going to do with the money.

"I'm going to keep them both. The dollar for good luck and the fifty till I have a pressing need to change it."

When he went to his room soon afterward he put the money in his trunk.

Later on he and Eva went out for a walk, as they did nearly every Saturday evening.

He bought an evening paper, and when they got home they looked over it together.

On the first page was the story, under lurid headlines, of a murder that had been committed the night before, but only discovered that afternoon.

The victim was a reputed miser, named Abel Ashfield, one of the oldest residents of Leesburg.

He lived with an old housekeeper, known as Martha Wills, in a large and roomy mansion on the suburbs.

It developed that he had kept all his money and valuables in a small safe set into the wall of his bedroom.

This had been broken open and everything abstracted by the villains who had perpetrated the crime.

The police were at work on the case, but it did not appear that they had any definite clue as to the identity of the scoundrels.

They had got into the house through a rear window in the basement, and had departed the same way with their booty.

How much money they had secured, and what else in the way of plunder they had made off with, was not known, as Abel Ashfield never told anybody about his affairs, not even his housekeeper, who had no idea what he was worth.

The old man had two nephews, one the son of his brother, a steady-going man who was cashier in the bank of the nearby town; the other, a good-for-nothing fellow, named Jim Barker, the son of his sister.

Ashfield had held no communication with either for many years, so the housekeeper said, though the latter had made several attempts of late to see his uncle.

That was the whole story, as picked up by the reporters, to the time of going to press, and it seemed to be up to the police to do something if the murderers were to be apprehended and the stolen property recovered.

"That's tough on old Ashfield," said Fred. "I remember seeing him once on the street—he was a small, white-haired man, with a face that looked like faded parchment. He looked as if he might be all of seventy years old. He didn't dress as if he was worth anything to speak of. One of the compositors at the office told me that he guessed the old man had no money, only the old house in which he lived. At any rate, he lived in a way that gave color to that opinion."

"I don't like to read about murders," said Eva, with a shudder.

"It isn't the most cheerful kind of reading, I'll admit," replied Fred.

"It's awful to think that a poor old man like him should be killed for what little money he might have had."

"You can't tell but what he had a good deal, if he really was a miser. The fact that he had a safe in the house would look as if he was well fixed."

"I do hope the rascals will be caught and punished."

"It is to be hoped they will. It might be that the old man's shiftless nephew had a hand in the crime."

"That's too dreadful to think of. His own flesh and blood. No, no," said Eva, "that doesn't seem possible."

"Such things have happened before. Even sons have been known to murder their fathers, either for money or some other reason."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the girl.

"This is a pretty wicked world, if one is to judge by what he sees printed in the daily papers. Leesburg is a paradise compared with a big city like New York or Chicago. Well, it's getting late; we'd better go to bed. We've got a nice long trolley ride before us in the morning."

Tom Benedict brought Edith Clark to the Valentine cot-



tage a little after nine next morning, and Fred and Eva were all ready to accompany them.

The trip they had planned over the electric road would take them to Plainville, twelve miles away, and they expected to walk around the pretty suburbs of that town and have a modest meal at a restaurant before returning to Leesburg.

It was an ideal day for the ride, and the young people enjoyed the trip to the other town immensely.

As they sat near the front of the car, which was well filled, they did not notice that Jude Ferguson, Slatts Morton and a couple of their gang were standing on the rear platform.

Such, however, was the case, and the young rascals cast furtive glances at them occasionally as the car speeded along.

When Fred signalled the car to stop on reaching Plainville, Jude and his companions got off quickly and retired under a near-by tree.

Then they followed Fred, Tom and the girls at a distance up the street.

"You heard them say that they were goin' to look at the old mill?" said one of the shadowers.

"Slatts and me heard Towne and Benedict plannin' things yesterday at the station," replied Jude. "Didn't we, Slatts?"

"That's right," answered Morton, nodding his head. "They're goin' to the old mill that folks say is haunted, and then they're goin' back to town to eat."

"Then we'd better git to the mill before 'em. The question is, how kin we separate 'em, so that we kin get a chance at Towne. We don't want to monkey with Benedict if we kin help it. One is enough for us at a time, and we ain't out for his scalp."

While the rascals were struggling with this question they made their way toward the mill in question as fast as their legs could carry them.

It was clear that they had designs only on Towne, and it took some figuring to find a practical way of carrying out their purpose.

At length they reached the dilapidated structure, which stood on the banks of a stream connecting with the river that ran up to Leesburg and further on.

Walking inside, they found the first floor consisted of two rooms, a large and a small one, both bare of everything but dust and cobwebs.

There was a hole in the floor of the small room through which projected a part of the huge oaken upright which had supported the driving shaft of the mill.

A jagged hole in the side of the building, overlooking the stream, showed where the shaft had connected with the water-wheel, now gone to ruin and half submerged in the water and mud.

There was also a trap-door in a corner of the room which the boys did not investigate, but contented themselves with peering through the hole into the dark and damp-smelling depths of the cellar, where a portion of the old machinery still stood in varying stages of decay.

They could not see much, and their curiosity did not induce them to pursue any exploration in that direction.

Returning to a passage between the rooms, they mounted a stout stairway to the regions above, where they found evidences of recent occupancy by what they supposed were tramps.

Jude looked out of one of the front windows and saw Fred, Tom and the girls approaching at a distance.

"Here they come, fellers," he said. "We'll hide in this big closet."

The four young rascals got out of sight and waited.

## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT HAPPENED IN THE MILL.

"Is that the old mill?" asked Eva Valentine, as they drew nearer. "It looks like an ordinary building."

"That's the old mill," replied Fred. "The big wheel is gone, and that's why it doesn't look like a mill any more."

They walked around it to the rear, looked down into the stream where the remains of the wheel lay, just as it had fallen, and then came back to the front.

"Come on in," said Fred.

"It's awfully dirty looking inside," said Edith Clark, thinking of her Sunday gown and the consequences that might ensue if she brushed up against the walls.

Finally they were induced by the boys to enter, and they walked around in a very careful manner.

Fred piloted the way about, as he was of an inquiring mind, and liked to look into things.

"Is this place haunted?" asked Eva, with a little shudder.

"That's what people say, but I don't take any stock in the report," replied Fred. "Most every old place is said to be haunted more or less. You aren't afraid in the bright daylight, are you?"

"No-o," she replied, clinging to his arm, and looking fearfully around the small inner room which, owing to the fact that it had but one window, and that boarded up, was not particularly cheerful.

"I wonder what's to be seen down-stairs?" said Tom, trying to make out something through the broken hole in the floor.

"I guess that's where the machinery was," replied Fred.

"There's a trap-door," pointed Benedict. "Let's you and I go down and take a look."

"No, you mustn't go," objected Eva, grabbing her escort by the sleeve.

Edith also vetoed the proposal.

"It won't take us but a minute," said Tom. "You girls can wait here."

But the girls wouldn't have it, so the boys gave up the idea and all four started back for the front room.

"Well, I'm going to see what's upstairs," said Fred, as they were crossing the passage.

Before any objection could be raised he was half-way up the stairs.

Tom was about to follow, but the girls declared that they didn't want to be left alone.

"Then I'll wait till Fred returns," replied Benedict.

Fred gained the floor above and looked around.

There was nothing particular to see there, and he was on the point of retracing his steps when he spied the roomy closet.

Curious to see if there was anything in it, he went towards it, grabbed the handle and pulled it open.

Two arms shot out like a flash, catching him by the collar, and he was jerked forward into the gloom of the closet.

Before he could recover from his surprise, Jude and his companions had him down on the floor and were pounding him for all they were worth.

Fred, however, was a game boy, and the darkness prevented his enemies from doing very effective work.

Half their blows landed on his back and shoulders, and did not hurt him greatly.

In a moment or two he started to defend himself in a way that promised to make it interesting for his unknown assailants.

The struggle made a noise that was heard below, and Tom, wondering what was the matter, sprang up the stairs.

At that moment a portion of the closet floor gave way under Fred, and he went down with a crash out of sight.

Jude followed, but saved himself by catching the jagged timbers.

He roared "Help!" and was caught and pulled up by his comrades.

The young rascals were alarmed, for they believed their victim had been killed, and they made a dash to escape from the building.

Slatts Morton and Jude were the first to reach the opening above the stairway, and in their hurry did not notice Tom Benedict coming up.

The result was they collided with him, and the three went rolling down the stairs, to the great terror of Eva and Edith, who screamed shrilly.

The other two of Jude's gang got as far as the stairs, and hearing the confusion below concluded not to make their exit that way.

They turned around and dashed for the back window, which was merely an open hole, bereft of sash and glass, if it ever had any.

Each in turn lowered himself out at arm's length, dropped to the ground, and then made off as fast as they could go, leaving Morton and Ferguson to shift for themselves.

Jude, Slatts, and Tom landed all in a heap at the foot of the stairs.

Unfortunately, Tom was the undermost, and the weight of the others, accompanied by an accidental kick in the head from Jude's boot, rendered him unconscious.

Jude and Slatts slowly extricated themselves from their predicament much the worse for their tumble.



Ferguson's nose had come into contact with the corner of the stairs, and it began to bleed badly.

"Oh, my nose!" howled Jude, scrambling to his feet.

"Wow! My neck!" groaned Slatts, following him.

Tom Benedict lay just as he had landed on the floor, silent and motionless.

The two girls were frightened out of their senses by the sudden and unexpected descent of the three boys together, and they did not know what to do except grab and hold on to each other for protection.

Ferguson and Morton glanced at the senseless Tom, then they noticed the girls in the gloom of the passageway, and, seized by a fear of the consequences of the trouble that had happened all around, they made a break for the front room, scurrying out of the mill and down the road to Plainville.

"Oh, dear, what does this all mean?" fluttered Eva, terribly unnerved. "Where is Fred?"

"Who is that on the floor at the foot of the stairs?" shivered Edith. "Is he dead?"

"Dead!" screamed Eva. "Oh, it may be Fred!"

"Or Tom! He went upstairs last," cried the thoroughly alarmed Edith, shaking in every limb. "What shall we do, Eva?"

Eva was no braver than the average girl, but she thought as much of Fred as though he were her brother.

The very idea that he might have been thrown downstairs by the rascals who had come tumbling on top of him, and was lying there dying, perhaps dead, nerved her to instant action.

She ran forward, knelt by the boy's side and peered into his face.

"Why, it's Tom," she cried, turning to Edith, with a great feeling of relief that it was not Fred.

"Tom!" shrieked Edith. "Oh, don't say he is dead!" she added, rushing forward, and dropping beside the lad she thought so much of.

"No, he isn't dead; he's breathing," replied Eva.

"But he may be dying," moaned Edith. "Help me carry him out into the air."

"Yes, yes, I will; but what can be keeping Fred upstairs? I'm afraid something has happened to him. I'm going to run up and see."

Under ordinary circumstances Eva never would have dared venture up on that floor, but her anxiety about Fred banished every other consideration from her mind.

She sprang up the stairs like a fawn and stepped out on the deserted floor of the room.

Not a sign of the boy was to be seen anywhere.

"Fred! Fred!" she called. "Where are you?"

She received no answer but the dull echo of her own voice.

"Oh, where can he be?" she breathed, in anxious suspense.

"There is no one here, and he came up here only a few moments ago."

The open window attracted her notice.

She ran over to it and looked out.

There was not a soul in sight.

She was growing more frightened at the mystery of the thing.

As she walked back she saw the closet, the door of which stood wide open.

In fear and trembling, she cautiously approached it and looked in.

At first she could see nothing clearly, then she observed the jagged hole in the floor.

She did not connect it with Fred's disappearance, and after a final look around the big room she returned downstairs, much bewildered and upset by her inability to find her escort.

"He isn't upstairs. There's no one there at all. I don't know what has become of him," she told Edith.

"Fred not upstairs!" gasped Miss Clark. "Why, he must be. He didn't come down."

"I know he didn't. I can't understand it at all. I looked all over the room, and I am positive he isn't there."

At that moment Tom moved and then sat up, looking around in a confused way.

"Tom, Tom," cried Edith eagerly, "are you hurt?"

"That you, Edith? I didn't know where I was. I don't know whether I'm hurt or not. I feel all sore and bruised, and my head feels as big as a balloon. Hello, Eva; you there? Say, what happened to me, anyway?"

"Don't you remember?" asked Edith. "You were knocked down-stairs by a couple of boys, I think."

"One of them looked just like Jude Ferguson, but of course it couldn't have been him, here in Plainville," spoke up Eva suddenly.

"I remember, now. We heard a racket up-stairs just after Fred went up, and I started up to see what was the matter. Two chaps ran into me, and we all came rolling down in a bunch. Where are they, and where is Fred?"

"They ran away," said Eva. "And Fred, we don't know where he is."

"Don't know where he is?" exclaimed Tom, in astonishment. "He's up-stairs, of course, if he didn't come down."

"No, he isn't," replied Eva, in a positive tone. "I was just up there looking for him, and there isn't anybody upstairs."

"That's funny," answered Tom. "There's no other way to get down that I know of except those stairs."

He stood up and felt of himself.

"I guess there are no bones broken. I'm only lame and sore from the tumble," he said. "I'll go up myself and take a look."

At that juncture there were sounds of steps in the next room.

An instant later two men, rather rough in appearance, darkened the doorway into the passage.

The moment they saw Tom and the two girls they stopped with a startled imprecation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DOUBTS AND FEARS.

"Well," growled the foremost man, "what are you people doing here?"

Tom looked at the fellow.

So did the girls, and they drew closer to Benedict, for they didn't like the looks of the intruders.

Just then there was a heavy rumbling in the air which presaged the approach of a thunder storm.

The sun had vanished behind a dark bank of clouds which covered half of the heavens, and the brightness of the early afternoon had gone out of the face of nature.

Under these conditions the passage between the two rooms was much darker than it had been, though neither Tom nor the girls had noticed the difference.

Thinking it well not to provoke trouble, Tom told the men that they had come there to look at the mill.

"Well, if you've seen all you want of it, you'd better go," was the surly reply.

"We're going as soon as a friend of mine comes down-stairs," answered Benedict.

"What's he doing up there?" asked the man suspiciously.

"I don't know what he's doing. He went up to look around. I'll see if I can find him."

"Don't leave us down here with these men," whispered Edith, who also expressed Eva's sentiments on the subject.

"Come up with me, then," said Tom, starting to ascend to the floor above.

The men didn't move, but watched the girls follow Benedict up the stairs.

As soon as the three had disappeared through the opening the fellows talked together in a low tone.

Tom called "Fred" several times, and, receiving no reply, walked to the closet and looked into it.

The room was so dark now that he didn't notice the hole in the floor, and might have walked into it and got a nasty tumble like Fred had experienced but that Eva caught him by the jacket and warned him of the danger.

He fumbled in his pocket for a match, but he didn't have one; so all he could do was to examine the closet in the dark with great caution.

As the place was quite bare he was soon satisfied that his chum wasn't in there.

"It's funny where Fred has gone," he said. "Could it be possible that he fell into that hole?" he added, as the awful possibility occurred to his mind.

Eva gave a gasp, and her heart nearly stopped beating.

She had not thought of such a thing when she noticed the hole herself.

Now that hole seemed to furnish the solution of the mystery surrounding Fred's unaccountable disappearance.

If he had fallen down there, how far had he gone?

"Call down and see if he's there," said Eva to Benedict in an agitated tone.

Tom shouted his chum's name repeatedly, but without result.

"He isn't down there," he said, "or ———"

He was interrupted by the voice of the man who had addressed him below.



This fellow now stood at the head of the stairs, with his head and shoulders above the floor.

"What's keeping you folks so long up here?" he said irritably. "Where's that friend of yours?"

Tom's reply was drowned by a heavy crash of thunder almost overhead.

The two girls gave a jump and uttered stifled screams.

Almost immediately the wind and rain swooped down on the old mill, and the air grew so dark that the young people could barely see one another.

"I didn't hear what you said," called the man on the stairs.

"I said that I don't know where my friend has got to," replied Tom.

"Oh, you don't," sneered the man. "What kind of steer are you giving me?"

"None at all. I'm telling you the truth."

"If your friend came up here, and didn't go down again, you ought to have found him long before this. I'd like to know what kind of game you're up to, anyway."

"We're up to no game. In any case," added Tom, losing his patience, "I don't see why you're so interested in us."

"Look here, young fellow, I don't intend to take any sass from you. Just come downstairs, where we can keep track of you, or there'll be something doing you won't like."

The fellow spoke in a tone that showed he meant business, and Tom, having the two girls to protect, decided that the easiest way to avoid trouble was to obey, for he couldn't hope to cope against the two men if they came at him.

"Come, let's go down," he said to Eva and Edith. "It won't do to rile these men. They can make it very unpleasant for us if they should take a notion to do so."

So Tom assisted the girls downstairs, and the three went into the front room, where they watched the progress of the thunder storm and kept a wary eye out for the two men, who, however, remained out of sight in the passage.

Eva was terribly distressed about Fred.

She pictured to herself that the boy was lying unconscious or dead somewhere in the hole under the closet, and she clung to Edith and cried bitterly.

Tom and Miss Clark both tried to comfort her, but she was inconsolable.

So the minutes passed and the storm continued outside.

It was an uncommonly heavy one.

The thunder crashed with fearful detonations and the lightning lit up the darkened landscape with startling intensity.

It was a trying situation all around for the young people, but there was nothing to do but grin and bear it.

What were they to do when the storm had passed?

How could they leave the mill without Fred?

They had not the slightest intention of deserting him, and yet it seemed evident that the men wished the mill to themselves for some reason.

Who were these men, anyway?

They were not tramps, but they might easily be something worse.

What was to be the end of this adventure?

At length, after what seemed to be an endless time, the thunderstorm passed away, and the sun came out again.

"What shall we do about Fred?" asked Eva.

"Blessed if I know," replied Tom, scratching his head in a perplexed way.

"Come, now, are you people going, or do you expect to camp here for the rest of the day?" asked the fellow who had done all the talking, poking his head into the room.

"Come outside," said Tom to the girls, paying no attention to the man.

"What do you suppose those men want about the mill?" asked Edith, after they had got into the sunshine.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they were a couple of crooks who are hanging out there for no good purpose," replied Tom. "I think the best and only thing we can do under the circumstances will be to hurry in to town and call at the police office. We'll tell the story of Fred's disappearance, and call their attention to the presence of these two fellows here. Then I could come back with an officer and make a systematic search for Fred."

The girls agreed that this would be the best plan to follow, though Eva hated to leave the mill, believing that Fred had fallen through the hole in the closet, and might be dead or dying somewhere inside the building.

"As the case stands," said Tom, "we can't do anything ourselves to help him, even if he did fall through that hole.

Therefore, the sooner we call in outside assistance, the better it may be for him."

Eva, convinced that Tom was right, offered no further objection to going back to town, and so the three set off as fast as they could walk.

The two men in the mill watched them until they were nearly out of sight; then they entered the small rear room, one of them lifted the trap in the door, and they disappeared down a flight of steps into the cellar, pulling the trap down after them.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE CELLAR OF THE OLD MILL.

When the floor of the closet gave way without the least warning under Fred, he went down into the dark depths like a shot.

Although he wasn't over two seconds falling clean through to the cellar, it seemed to his startled fancy as if he had dropped a mile.

He landed on top of an old mildewed straw mattress, which broke his fall, but the shock was sufficient to deprive him of consciousness.

He lay there insensible all through the thunderstorm, and began to recover his scattered faculties as it passed away.

When he came to he had no idea where he was, nor, at first, what had happened to him.

He was surrounded by dense darkness, and he began to wonder what it all meant.

Then his thoughts began to shape themselves, and he recollected having been attacked by several persons, who seemed to be boys, and in the midst of the mix-up the floor of the closet had given way and he had been precipitated downward.

That was the extent of his knowledge.

He believed he had only been senseless a few moments, and sat up to ascertain the extent of his injuries.

"Where the dickens am I?" he breathed. "It's a wonder that I didn't break my neck, for I must have fallen some distance. I don't seem to feel any the worse for it, though. Feels like a mattress I'm on. That must have saved me. It's lucky for me that I hit it so neatly. If I'd struck the hard ground, I probably would have broken half my bones. I wonder who those rascals were who assaulted me? They were hiding in the closet. The first idea I had of trouble was being jerked right into the closet, thrown down, and a shower of fists descending on my back and head like huge hailstones. Then the floor gave way, and the last thing I remember was the shock of fetching up down here. This is an adventure I didn't count on when we came out to look at the old mill. Well, I must see if I can escape from this place and get back to Tom and the girls."

Fred felt in his pocket for his match-safe, which he always carried, struck a lucifer and looked around.

He found himself at the bottom of a kind of shaft, with a large hole opening out into what he surmised to be the cellar of the mill.

The hole, however, was barricaded by several dilapidated barrels full of rubbish.

Fred saw that he would be obliged to upset one of them to get out.

Striking another match to see which barrel he had better tackle for that purpose, he saw what appeared to be a good-sized valise crowded in among them.

Grabbing hold of it, he yanked it out, and found it very heavy.

Wondering what was in it, he lit a third match and looked it over.

On one side, in small black letters, he saw distinctly "Abel Ashfield."

He gazed at the name with fascinated eyes, for it was that of the old miser who had been murdered and robbed some time between Friday night and Saturday morning.

This evidently had belonged to him, and the thought instantly occurred to Fred that, from its weight and bulkiness, it contained the plunder taken from the old man's house by the scoundrels who had committed the crime.

"My gracious!" he exclaimed, as the match expired in his fingers, "this is a discovery for fair. The man or men who hid this can't be a great way off. Could it be that it was they who were hidden in the closet and attacked me when I came upon them accidentally? It must be so. Who else would have been trying to keep under cover up there? They are likely to come down here soon to see what has become of me. I don't fancy the idea of going up against such scoundrels,



especially in this place, where they could easily do me up. I must make a move quick and try to outwit them."

Fred put down the dead man's valise, and, applying all his strength to the first barrel he laid his hands on, toppled it over.

Snatching up the valise, he stepped out of the hole over the wrecked barrel.

Striking another match, he looked around the cellar for some means of making his exit from the place.

He saw the stairs leading to the trap and walked over to them.

As he put his foot on the lowest stair he heard the sounds of heavy footsteps on the naked boards above.

"Goodness! That may be them now. I must hide."

He slipped under the stairway, and a moment later the steps creaked and the trap was raised, letting down a dim light.

Two men came down.

"Close the trap, Bill," said the first.

"You don't s'pose I'd let it stay open, do you?" growled the other.

The speaker pulled the trap after him, and Fred could hear the two men breathing in the dark within a few feet of him.

"Get out your pocket lantern, Bill," said the first man, as he shuffled forward. "We'll open the valise, divide the stuff, and make off by different routes. We can meet at Barney Dolan's, in Chicago."

"We're takin' chances showin' ourselves in daylight, Harker."

Fred caught his breath on hearing the name.

This must be the dead man's scapegrace nephew, Jim Harker.

He was either the murderer or the murderer's accomplice, it mattered little which, for his uncle's blood was on his hands just the same.

"We can't help it," replied Harker. "That chap with the two girls is more than likely to report our presence in this mill. He acted deuced suspicious to me, giving us that cock-and-bull story about a friend of his being in the upper story when there wasn't any one there. We had all we could do to get rid of them."

"They seemed to have some object hangin' around the place," replied the man Bill. "They didn't want to go."

"That's what makes me skittish about staying here any longer. It's my opinion we'll be safer out in the open, and that we can't make a move any too quickly."

The conversation of the rascals rather mystified Fred.

Clearly it had not been they who attacked him in the closet.

Then who were his assailants, and why were they hiding in the closet?

He recalled the fact that during the brief mix-up his impression was that his attackers were boys.

He now felt pretty certain that he had not been mistaken.

Why several boys should have been hiding in the closet, and why they should have assaulted him the way they did, was a mystery that was beyond his comprehension.

"We'll have to make two bundles apiece of the swag," said Bill. "Then we had better hide in the woods till it gets dark."

"We can do that. Bring your lantern this way. One of these barrels has fallen over. I don't see how that could have happened. They were all right when we left here to get something to eat in town."

"I hope there hain't been any one here nosin' around while we were away," said Bill, in an anxious tone.

"I don't see what should bring any one down into this cellar," replied Harker.

"Nor me. It ain't a place people are likely to go snoopin' in."

Fred saw the speaker flash his pocket lantern about the barrels and then heard Harker utter a fierce imprecation.

"The valise isn't here. It's gone," he said.

"Gone!" gasped Bill.

"Yes, gone," replied Harker, with more hard language.

"It might have fallen behind the barrels."

He bent across the barrel Fred had overturned and directed the rays of the bull's eye all around.

"It isn't there," said Harker.

"Then it may be buried under this rubbish," suggested Bill.

"Give me the lantern a moment," said Harker.

His companion handed it to him.

"Look at this overturned barrel, will you," continued Harker. "Do you mean to tell me that could have turned over of itself? You can see it was full of rubbish and dirt. Somebody has been here, and they've taken the valise."

Bill was staggered by his associate's words, and then he began pulling away the dirt from around the barrel.

Finding no sign of the valise, he lifted up the barrel to its former position and looked again.

Then he began to make use of some language that wouldn't look well in print.

"I'll bet we've been taken in by that young chap with the girls," he roared. "He had another fellow with him, just as he claimed, but instead of bein' upstairs the fellow was in the cellar. He was down here rummagin' around when we came on the other rooster with the two girls. What were they doin' in the passage if they wasn't keepin' watch? And they didn't want to make a move, neither, when you spoke to them. As soon as they seen we meant to stay the chap fools us with his yarn about his friend bein' upstairs. Then they went upstairs to find him. We heard him callin' to the other fellow a number of times. I'll bet that was a signal of some kind. Then look how long they stayed up there, until you had to go up and rout 'em down. It's plain enough now that the fellow in the cellar found the valise and sneaked with it while we were watchin' the others."

"How could he get out of this place and we standing in the passage all the time?" asked Harker. "There isn't any outlet in the rear."

"He must have got away, unless he's here yet."

As Bill uttered the last words, Fred suddenly realized the danger of his position.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FRED COMES IN FOR A THOUSAND DOLLARS.

Harker, as if impressed by his companion's words, began to flash the light about the cellar.

"I'm afraid I'm in for it," thought Fred uneasily.

Fortunately for him, they started their investigations at the other end of the place, and Fred decided to make an effort to escape while they were so employed.

He came out from the shelter of the stairway, softly mounted the steps, pushed up the trap, placed the valise on the floor, and then followed, closing the trap as softly as he could.

His exit was not observed.

Taking up the valise, he made his way out of the building on his tiptoes, and then clasping his heavy burden in his arms started down the road toward town as fast as he could go.

He saw that it had been raining heavily recently, and from the position of the sun noted the fact that two or three hours had elapsed since the time he, Tom, and the girls had come to the mill.

"I must have been unconscious in the cellar for some time after all," he mused, as he hurried along. "I wonder where the folks are? They were evidently driven away from the mill by those two rascals. They must be expecting me to join them somewhere along the trolley line. Well, I've got to go to the police station first, turn in this valise, and put the officers onto those chaps, who, without doubt, are the murderers of Abel Ashfield. The crime has done them no good, for I've got their plunder away from them. I s'pose my name will be in the papers now. I can't say that I'm stuck on that. But I'm mighty glad I euchered those scoundrels. I can tell who one of the murderers is, anyhow, and I'll be able to identify both if they are caught. There's one thing I'd like to know, and that is who the boys were that were in the closet. They were not there for any good purpose, that's certain."

Just then Fred sighted two persons coming up the street at a rapid gait.

When they got closer Fred, with great satisfaction, recognized his friend Tom.

The other was a policeman.

Fred waved his hand and set the valise down, for he was winded.

Tom gave a shout, pointed him out to the officer, and they hurried up.

"My goodness! I'm mighty glad to see you, Fred," cried Tom. "We've been worried to death about you. We couldn't understand what had happened to you after you went upstairs in the mill. You disappeared as if you had vanished into thin air. We found a hole in the floor of the closet, and were afraid you had fallen through it and were perhaps badly hurt."

"I did fall through it, right to the cellar."

"You don't look as if you were hurt much," said Tom in surprise.



"I wasn't hurt at all, though I was knocked insensible. I lighted on an old mattress which was at the bottom of the shaft."

"Geel! You were lucky. Eva will be pleased to death to find that nothing has happened to you. She's been so worried about you that we didn't know what to do with her."

"Is that so?" asked Fred, rather delighted that he was an object of so much interest to the girl whom he thought a whole lot of.

"Say, where did you get that valise?" asked Tom.

"I found it in the mill cellar. By the way, officer, you heard about the murder of Abel Ashfield, haven't you?"

"I should say I have. Half our force are out hunting the neighborhood for some trace of the murderers."

"Well, there are two of them, and they were in the cellar of the old mill about fifteen minutes ago."

"What!" exclaimed the policeman, with an incredulous look.

"I'm giving you straight goods," replied Fred. "Here's the proof of it. This valise belonged to Abel Ashfield—there's his name on it—and I guess from its weight that it contains the stolen property from the old man's safe."

The officer was astonished.

He saw right away that Fred was giving him the exact facts of the case.

He took up the valise and admitted that it was heavy enough to contain a lot of valuable plunder.

"How did you get possession of this?"

"It's too long a story to tell you now if you expect to go after the rascals who killed Abel Ashfield."

"You say there are two of them?"

"Yes, and one is Jim Harker, the old man's nephew."

"Say, Fred," exclaimed Tom suddenly, "I'll bet those were the chaps that made the girls and me leave the mill."

"Those were the ones," replied Fred.

"If the girls had suspected that at the time they'd have had a fit. They'd have run right out into the storm."

"What storm? What are you talking about?"

"What am I talking about? Why, there was a big thunderstorm an hour or more ago. Didn't you hear the thunder?"

"Not a bit. I must have been unconscious all through it."

"Well, it was a corker. The girls were almost frightened to death. It shook the mill from roof to cellar."

"I didn't know a thing about it. I noticed, however, that it had been raining."

"Raining! Well, I should say. It simply poured down for about half an hour. I thought it never would let up. When it was over those rascals chased us out of the mill, and we came on to town to notify the police about your mysterious disappearance, and to get assistance to search the building through for you."

"Where are the girls?"

"At the police station."

"Well, officer," asked Fred, "are you going to the mill after those murderers?"

"As there are two of them, and I dare say they'll put up a desperate resistance, I don't think I'd better go alone. We'll return to the station, and you can tell your story to the captain."

"But the villains will get away in the meantime," replied Fred.

"We'll have to chance that. Come on. I'll carry the valise."

So they started off for the police station.

When Fred entered the station, accompanied by Tom and the officer, Eva fairly ran into his arms, she was so delighted to see him looking as usual.

"Oh, Fred, where did you go? Do tell me."

"I went on an exploring expedition," he grinned.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I took an unexpected drop into the cellar."

"Then you did fall through that hole in the closet?"

"I guess that's about the size of it, Eva, though the hole wasn't there when I was yanked into the place."

"It wasn't there? And what do you mean by saying that you were yanked into the closet?" she asked in a puzzled way.

"Come, young man," said the officer, who had placed the valise on the presiding officer's desk, "step up and tell the captain your story."

Accordingly, Fred stepped up and, with his friends around him and the policeman standing near by, he related all that happened to him from the moment he left Tom and the girls on the first floor of the mill and went to the second story on a tour of investigation.

The captain complimented him on his nerve in stealing out of the cellar at the critical moment with the valise in his

hand, and assured him that his conduct would be favorably reported to the Leesburg authorities.

The four young people then left the police station to get their belated dinner, after which they took a car for home.

The morning papers had the full story of Fred's adventure in the old mill at Plainville which resulted in the recovery by him of the stolen property taken by the murderers of Abel Ashfield.

The valise contained \$20,000 in money, \$10,000 worth of diamonds, and other precious stones, several mortgage papers, and Abel Ashfield's will, made out in favor of his brother's son, George Ashfield, and cutting off James Harker with one dollar.

Harker and his companion Bill were not captured by the Plainville police when they subsequently searched the mill and the woods in that direction.

The rascals had taken time by the forelock and made their escape.

As soon as George Ashfield heard of the murder of his uncle he came to Leesburg and made arrangements for the funeral.

He did this out of respect to his father's brother, and without any idea that he would be any great gainer by it.

The discovery of the old miser's will, however, among the recovered property made a whole lot of difference to him.

He immediately took charge of the estate as the acknowledged heir, and almost the first thing he did was to present Fred Towne with \$1,000 as an evidence of his appreciation of what he owed the boy, for had not Fred recovered the valise the will, as well as the property, would have been lost to him, and he would only have been entitled to a half interest in his uncle's house.

Fred put the money in a savings bank, and when he showed the book to Eva he said:

"My luck, you see, started with that dollar I won racing with the Pacific Express. It was only a dollar, but it's netted me so far \$1,050."

"Do you expect it to put any more in your way?" asked Eva, laughing.

"Do I? I wouldn't be surprised if it made me a millionaire one of these days."

## CHAPTER IX.

### JUDE HEARS SOMETHING HE DOESN'T LIKE.

Jude Ferguson and Slatts Morton, who was a Gordon press feeder, were much surprised to see Fred Towne walk into the office on Monday morning same as usual.

They had not expected to see him turn up for a week, if he ever did again, for they had figured that the fall he got would knock him out badly.

Neither had read the morning paper containing the story of the recovery, through Fred, of the dead miser's property, and they did not learn about the matter until a pressman spoke about it in Morton's hearing, and he immediately beckoned Jude over to his press and told him.

Ferguson wouldn't believe it at first, but he found on investigation that the story was true.

"Instead of injuring Towne," he said to Morton later on, "it looks to me that we put him in the way of doin' a big thing and gettin' his name in the papers. It makes me sick to think of the luck that fellow has had lately. First he wins that dollar, of which I ought to have had half, and now he has made a sort of hero of himself. Some people get everything in this world," said Jude, with a look of disgust, "while others get nothin'. It's a bum world."

"What you goin' to do about it?" asked Morton.

"Oh, I'll reach him yet. The gang will help me out."

"Chase yourself, now. The foreman has his eye on us."

Jude walked away and Morton kept on feeding the press he was at, which hadn't stopped for a moment during the brief conversation.

Fred was the talk of the printing office that morning.

The compositors shook hands with him and congratulated him upon what he had done.

"The Plainville police never would have recovered that stolen property," said one of the compositors when Fred went into his alley for a line of type to complete a job he was helping another printer on. "Those chaps would have got away with it, just as they've got away themselves."

"That may be," admitted Fred; "but after all it was just pure luck that put me in the way of the valise. If I hadn't fallen down that shaft, I never would have known it was there."



"That's all right; but look at the nerve you showed in walking off with it right under the noses of the rascals. That's what counts. You ought to get a good reward for saving \$30,000 worth of money and valuables."

"I wouldn't refuse it if it came my way," grinned the boy. "I should say not."

Fred, having set the line he was after, left the alley.

That morning Gregg called Fred to his desk and surprised him by saying that he was going to get another errand boy, and that hereafter he meant to keep him at the case.

"After this week your wages will be six dollars," added the foreman.

"Thank you, sir," replied Fred, delighted at his advancement.

The reason for his promotion was because Gregg was satisfied that Towne could do as well as a certain \$12 hand he had, and as Mr. Koop was always at him about running the office as economically as possible, he had decided to discharge the man and save \$6 on the weekly payroll.

He would have liked to have got rid of his brother-in-law, too, for in his opinion Jude didn't earn his wages, but he didn't care to raise a ruction in his domestic circle by letting him go.

As soon as the compositors heard about Fred's raise they renewed their congratulations and expressed their satisfaction.

Before the week was out he received the \$1,000 from George Ashfield alluded to in the previous chapter, but he didn't mention this piece of good luck to any one but Tom Benedict under promise of secrecy, and the Valentines.

Fred and Eva were drawn more than ever together by the adventure at the mill.

The girl had given such strong evidences of her regard for him that the boy was more attentive to her than ever, much to the satisfaction of Mrs. Valentine, who, now that Fred was worth \$1,000, had been promoted in his business, and was undeniably smart and a nice boy, began to figure on her young boarder as an excellent proposition for her daughter in the future.

When Jude discovered that Fred had been raised both in position and wages he was wild with rage.

He made a kick to Gregg, but got no satisfaction.

"I don't know what you see in that Towne," he growled to his brother-in-law at the supper table that night. "You've made him as good as me, and I've been a year longer in the business than he. You ought to give me a couple of more dollars."

"I would if you were worth it, but you ain't," replied Gregg frankly.

"I don't see why I ain't worth more'n Towne," answered Jude discontentedly.

"There are a lot of things you don't see," replied the foreman, impatiently. "You give me more trouble in a week than Towne does in a year."

"Is that so?" sneered Jude. "I thought you didn't like him."

"I don't like him much, but I'm not running the office on my likes and dislikes. It's up to me to make the best showing I can, and Towne is a mighty smart young printer. I wish you were half as satisfactory, if you want to know my opinion. It is only the fact that you're my brother-in-law that enables you to hold your job. And that won't avail you if Koop ever gets onto you, let me tell you that. He's got sharp eyes, the old man has, and I've seen him watching you more than once lately. He spoke to me about your time slips this morning, so you'd better look out. He'll be sure to compare your work with Towne's now that he's steady on the case, and if he takes a notion that you'll have to go, I won't be able to keep you."

Jude was rather startled by this plain statement of facts. "Well, you kin fix my time slips, can't you?" he asked, rather humbly.

"The only thing I can do is to give you the easy jobs, but even then if you don't hustle more than you've been doing you'll get into trouble. You waste too much time around the office. When you get a job to set you're always hunting for the type. Can't you remember where the cases are?"

"You ought to give me more straight matter to set. I kin do better on that."

"I guess I'll have to keep you on straight matter altogether after this. I've been trying to make a printer out of you. I've given you every chance to get ahead. It doesn't seem to do any good. Now, Towne hasn't had half the show you've had, and he's doing first class. He can set most any kind of a reprint job. When I have sent him to help any of the

men, he's always given satisfaction. On the other hand, the comps always have a kick coming over you. Either you delay the job by your slowness, or you have to set a line over two or three times before it will answer. Now, I'll give you fair warning, that unless you do better right away, Towne is going to show you up by his work. Then Koop will want to know why I'm keeping you. You had better understand right now that I'm not going to hurt my chances on your account. You'll never have a better opportunity to get ahead than you're having now under me, and if you ain't a fool altogether you'll sit up and take notice."

With those words Gregg finished his supper and left the table.

This wasn't the first nor the second time that he had pulled Jude over the coals for one thing or another at the office, but it was the first time he had intimated that Ferguson's hold on his job was so insecure.

Jude was disgusted at his brother-in-law's attitude toward him, and set up a kick with his sister, who had always stood by him.

Mrs. Gregg, however, was beginning to wake up to the fact that her brother wasn't the ill-used person he had so long represented himself to be.

She had been accustomed to take issue with her husband over Jude and stand up for him, reason or no reason; but at their last run-in on the tiresome subject, Mr. Gregg had got mad and said such plain truths about Jude that Mrs. Gregg weakened.

"Well, why don't you attend to business?" replied his sister, sharply. "Jim says you aren't worth your salt in the office."

"He said that, did he?" snarled Jude.

"He did. Now, after what he just said to you at the table, it looks to me as if you don't seem to care whether you get ahead or not. I can't be fighting with Jim all the time on your account. I've something else to do."

She got up and began to clear off the table.

Jude was mad clear through.

He counted on his sister, and now it looked as if she, too, was going back on him.

Being naturally ignorant of the ins and outs of the printing business, she was unable to see through her brother's fake excuses, and thus he had been able to work on her sympathy; but it looked now as if he had reached the limit of his pull.

Jude said something under his breath that his sister wouldn't have been pleased to have heard, and snatching up his hat went out to hunt up some of his gang.

## CHAPTER X.

### JUDE AND HIS FRIEND SLATTS GET IT IN THE NECK.

Jude knew in his heart that Fred would make him look like thirty cents in the comparison of their work.

For that reason, if for no other, he hated Towne worse than ever.

He was sore on his brother-in-law for promoting Towne, and thus putting him in a position to show him (Jude) up.

Instead of resolving to apply himself with more diligence to acquiring an insight into the trade, he devoted his thoughts to scheming against Fred.

"If I could only get him out of the office somehow, I'd be all right," he mused. "There isn't any use of me expectin' Jim to fire him, for he won't. I must get around it some other way. Slatts will help me, for he doesn't like Towne no more'n me. I'll go around to Slatt's house and talk the matter over with him."

He met Morton coming out of the very humble dwelling where he lived.

"Where you bound, Slatts?" he asked.

"Where do you s'pose?" replied Morton. "I'm bound for the clubhouse."

"I'm with you," said Jude.

The clubhouse in question was the rendezvous of the "Night Hawks," on the outskirts of the town, about half a mile away.

On the way Jude enlarged upon his grievance against Towne, and said he was anxious to find some way to get Fred away from the office for good.

"I don't know how you're goin' to do it if your brother-in-law won't fire him," said Morton.

"I've got to do somethin' or first thing I know I'll get bounced myself."



"How will you?" asked Morton in surprise.

Thereupon Jude told him what Gregg said at the supper table.

Morton was smart enough to see the point.

He was aware that his companion was no great shakes of a printer.

He also knew that Towne was uncommonly clever at the business, for he had heard the men say so a score of times.

Under these circumstances Jude's lack of ability was bound to attract the attention of Mr. Koop, who was always snooping around the composing and press rooms when he was in the office.

As a matter of fact, the proprietor had observed Ferguson's methods already, and had called his foreman's attention to the fact, but Gregg had covered up Jude's delinquencies in order to save him.

Mr. Koop had also noticed Fred's activity and constant diligence, and had likewise pointed the boy out to Gregg as one deserving of encouragement.

Consequently, when the foreman proposed to advance the boy to the case and raise him to \$6, the proprietor nodded approvingly.

"You'd better put up a better bluff than you've been doin'," said Morton. "If you don't, I think I see your finish. There's no gettin' away from the fact that Towne can set type all around you."

"Yah!" snarled Jude. "I thought you was a friend of mine?"

"So I am, but I can't go behind what everybody knows in the office. You know blamed well that you couldn't set a decent-lookin' job to save your life. Look at that card you put together this mornin'."

"What about it?" snorted Ferguson.

"Why, the reader almost had a fit when he saw the proof."

"How do you know he did?"

"I was standin' at his desk waitin' for him to revise a press-proof of a billhead I had on my jobber. He looked at your job, then at your name, and then he showed it to his copyholder. Egan looked at it and said, 'Rotten!' 'I'll have to show this to Gregg,' said the reader; 'he'll never stand for that.' Gregg must have turned it over to somebody else to reset, for it was put on my press afterward to work off, and it looked as different as daylight and darkness from the way you had it."

Jude didn't make any reply, and soon afterward the two boys reached the old rookery that was used as a meeting-place by the "Night Hawks," and went up-stairs.

If any plot was hatched against Fred that night, nothing came of it.

Three weeks passed away and Towne made a fine showing at the work he was put at.

He wasn't kept altogether at the case, but helped on the stone as well.

The chief stone-hand liked the boy very much, and whenever he had the chance he instructed Fred in his special line.

He showed him how to lay out the various forms they were engaged on, explained the relative distances between the head, foot and sides of pages, and showed him how to gauge their position by a folded sheet of paper on which the form was to be printed.

When Fred wasn't working at the case, or on the large stones, he was sometimes put at locking up small forms for the job presses.

One day one of his forms went to Morton, who, knowing he had locked it up, tried to get him in trouble by loosening the quoins a little so that the rollers pulled the type up and the spaces with it.

Then he complained to the foreman of the small presses, who, as he expected, told him to take the form back to the stone and have it fixed.

Morton knew that Gregg never liked to see a form brought back to be fixed up, so he halloed out to Fred:

"Say, why don't you lock your forms up right? This one is all loose. Everythin' is workin' up."

Gregg heard him and walked over to look at it.

Of course, he didn't expect Fred to be perfect yet, but this form looked as if a jar would send it into pi.

"See here, Towne," he said angrily, "what do you mean by sending a form to press in that shape? Don't you know any better?"

Fred came over and examined it.

"I didn't send it that way. I tried it before I carried it over to the pressroom, and it was as tight as a drum."

"Oh, it was," sneered Gregg. "Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Somebody must have monkeyed with it," replied Fred, stoutly. "I try to do all my work right."

"Do you mean to say that I monkeyed with it?" demanded Morton.

"Are you willing to swear that is the way you got it from me?"

"Yes, I am."

"You saw that it was loose when I handed it to you?"

"No. I didn't notice nothin' wrong till the rollers pulled the type out."

One of the compositors came up at that moment.

"That isn't Towne's fault," he said to the foreman. "I saw Morton loosen up the quoins before he put the chase on the press, and I wondered why he did it."

Gregg, who did not like Morton, demanded to know if he had touched the quoins.

Slatts, however, seeing he was in a hole, began to lie out of it.

The foreman didn't believe him.

This was the first form locked up by Fred that there had been any complaint about, and that fact was much in his favor.

"Don't let me catch you at such a trick again, Morton," said Gregg, pointedly. "Fix it up," he added, turning to Fred and then walking away.

Fred planted the type down and took up the quoin key to tighten the patent iron wedges.

"I'm on to you, Morton," he said in a low tone. "You tried to get me in trouble over this form. You know there was nothing the matter with it when I gave it to you. If you get funny again, I'll make you sorry for it."

"Yes, you will," sneered Slatts, with a malevolent look. "I s'pose you think you know it all since you've been promoted. Been tryin' to show Ferguson up, too. Well, maybe your finish will come all right."

Fred made no reply, but tightened the form, tried it, and handed it to Morton, who went back to the press with it.

"What was the trouble with the form?" asked Tom Benedict, when Fred went into his alley, stick in hand, to set a line of type.

Fred told him, and then added that he guessed it was a put-up job.

"I'll bet it was," answered Tom. "You want to keep your eyes skinned for both Slatts and Jude. They'll try to do you if they can."

"They'd better not let me catch them at any funny business," said Fred. "I'd go for their scalps quicker than winking."

"That's right. If you need any help, I'll polish one of them off myself."

"You needn't hunt for trouble on my account, Tom. I can look out for myself."

That afternoon Gregg went off at two o'clock to attend a funeral, and one of the compositors was instructed to give work out and look after things.

Mr. Koop, knowing that his foreman was away, made it his business to keep his eye on the composing room.

On one of his snooping tours he caught Jude and Slatts Morton chinning behind one of the frames.

He didn't say anything to them, and they were not aware that he had detected them.

Next morning he called Gregg into his office, told him what he'd seen, and ordered him to discharge both of the boys that afternoon, which was Saturday.

Accordingly, when he handed Morton his pay envelope, Gregg told him that his services were dispensed with.

Morton believed he was discharged on account of the trouble about Fred's form, and he privately vowed to get square with the young printer.

Five minutes later Jude was informed that he was bounced.

He put up a big howl to his brother-in-law, but the latter cut him short.

"I told you what you might expect if you didn't do better," said Gregg. "Mr. Koop has ordered your discharge and it is impossible for me to keep you."

Then Gregg told him how the boss had caught him and Morton loafing behind a frame, and that had settled their fate.

Jude walked out of the office, looking very black.

He joined Slatts and they went off together vowing vengeance against the whole establishment, from the proprietor down.



## CHAPTER XI.

## THE YOUNG INCENDIARIES.

On Saturday nights Fred and Tom were accustomed to go to a gymnasium and practice athletic exercises for the benefit of their health and to enlarge their muscles.

After Fred had eaten his supper he went to Benedict's house to meet him as usual.

Tom was waiting for him, and they started for the gymnasium in good spirits.

"Well," said Tom as they walked along, "I'm mighty glad that Jude and Slatts have been fired from the office. If anybody ever deserved to be bounced it was Jude, but I never thought he'd get it as long as his brother-in-law was foreman of the office."

"Gregg didn't bounce him of his own accord," replied Fred. "It was the boss's orders."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. Mr. Koop caught him and Morton yesterday afternoon chinning behind Benson's frame. I saw the old man standing behind the cutting-machine looking at something very attentively. I wondered what it was that interested him and watched him out of the corner of my eye. After a time he walked away, and by and by I saw Jude and Morton come out from behind the frame. Then I guessed that Mr. Koop had been watching them, and I was satisfied they'd hear from him on the subject, though I didn't think they'd be discharged for it."

"Well, I'm not surprised that Jude got it in the neck at last for sojering. He could put in more time doing nothing than any other chap I ever met."

"That's right. I've often wondered how he managed to square himself on his time slips. I guess Gregg must have helped him out."

"He certainly did, or else Jude covered it up with that old bluff 'distribution,' which he could easily work in, seeing he was distributing about half his time."

"I could distribute as much type in half a day as he put away in a week," said Fred, with a laugh. "The men always swore that he kept the job cases in rotten shape. It didn't seem to worry him much if he dropped half a dozen different letters in the same box, so long as he got the line of type in the case. I suppose you remember the time he distributed a couple of handfuls of old-style agate, three-nick, into a Roman nonpareil, two-nick case. I had to pick it all out before the case could be used, and it was the dickens of a job."

"I remember it, for I wanted to use the case myself at the time and couldn't. Jude wouldn't have lasted a week in any other printing office. I wonder what he'll do now? Slatts can get a job feeding at any of the other offices, if there's a vacancy for a job press feeder, and he can hold his job down if he wants to; but Jude, even if he gets a job, will find it a hard matter to make good."

They had reached the gymnasium by this time, so the subject under discussion was dropped.

The boys usually remained there until it was time for the place to close up, and this occasion was no exception to the rule.

It was half-past ten when they left, and they decided to take a short-cut home.

This carried them up past the rear of Koop's printing office. That part of the town was dark and deserted at night.

The gas lamps were few and far between, and their light did not penetrate far.

Suddenly Tom pointed a short distance ahead.

"I saw two shadows run into the alley at the back of our office," he said.

"I saw them, too. Looks kind of suspicious, doesn't it?" said Fred.

"Yes. I don't see what any one should be doing in there at this time of the night. They might be thieves."

"If they broke into our place, they wouldn't get much. They couldn't steal the presses, and I don't think they'd bother with the type."

"They might break into Koop's safe and get away with any money he had locked up there."

"If they're thieves they're more likely to force their way into one of the other buildings than into ours. You don't often hear of burglars looting a printing office."

"I don't ever remember hearing of such a case. Suppose we steal into the alley and see if we can find out what those chaps are up to. If we think they are crooks we can look up a policeman and put him onto them."

"All right. I'm with you."

So they entered the alley on tiptoes.

It was as dark as the fabled caves of Erebus and they had to grope their way along, using great caution not to stumble over objects that lay about.

The alley ended in a small yard at the back of the printing office.

There was not a sign of the intruders anywhere.

"Where could they have gone to?" asked Tom.

"They must have made their way into one of the buildings."

"Then we'd better try to find an officer pretty quick."

"Wait a moment. Let us see if we can find out which building they've broken into," said Fred.

It didn't take them long to discover that one of the basement windows under the printing office was open.

"They've gone in here," whispered Fred.

"That's what they have. They're burglars, as sure as you live. It's up to us to hunt a cop."

"Well, you go and find one. I'll remain here and watch."

"You've got plenty of nerve to do that. They might catch you when they come out."

"I don't believe they will. If you're going, get a move on."

Tom at once moved off down the alley toward the street and was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

There was a small barrel beside the open basement window, and Fred crouched down behind that.

He hadn't been there but a moment or two before he saw a couple of heads appear at the opening.

"There's no one here, Slatts," said the voice of Jude Ferguson. "I told you that you were dreamin'."

"I could have sworn I heard steps in this yard," replied Morton.

"Well, you kin see for yourself that there's no one here, can't you?"

"There don't seem to be. Let's go back and finish the job."

The heads disappeared, leaving Fred greatly astonished at their presence there at that time of the night.

"They're up to some piece of wickedness, I'll bet a hat," breathed Fred. "I'm going to find out what it is. They haven't any right to be here, so late at night especially. I wouldn't be surprised but they're up to some mischief in the printing office. Maybe they mean to pi a lot of our type in revenge for having been discharged. It is like them to do just such a mean trick. Let them try it and they'll see what the inside of a cell in the jail looks like."

With these remarks in his mind, Fred crept in through the window and made his way cautiously forward in the gloom.

His intention was to ascend to the printing office, where he expected to find Jude and Morton inside up to some mischief.

He meant to give them both the surprise of their lives, and something in the way of a pounding that they were likely to remember for several days, after which, if they had done any damage, he intended to put the police after them.

Suddenly he heard sounds over in a corner of the cellar under the stairs leading to the first floor.

"That must be them over there," breathed Fred. "What are they up to down here?"

He slipped softly over and heard the two boys talking in low tones.

They were evidently doing something, for he saw the dim glow of a candle which reflected their forms on the dirty wall, and heard the rustling of paper and the occasional splitting sound of wood being torn apart.

"This is where we get hunk on old Koop," chuckled Ferguson.

"Bet your life he'll pay well for bouncin' us," replied Morton.

"We won't be the only ones that'll lose our jobs," said Jude.

"That's right. The whole push will be huntin' other sits Monday."

"Fred Towne among them. Gee! How I hate that feller!"

"He and Tom Benedict will be on their uppers in a week or two, for there ain't jobs enough in town to half go 'round."

"I'd like to see them both starve," was Jude's charitable reply.

"So would I. But no such luck. Now, everythin's ready. Who's goin' to touch her off?"

"You do it. You're nearest the candle."

"Not much. We'll both do it together, then one can't give the other away."

"Ho! Hain't we sworn to secrecy?" snorted Ferguson.

"Sure we are; but I believe in bein' on the safe side always. Come nearer and grab onto the candle. What are you holdin' back for? Are you flunkin' already?"



"I should say not."

"Then don't be so slow. It's after eleven and we want to get home right away, so we won't be suspected of havin' had a hand in this thing."

"Who'll suspect us?"

"Your brother-in-law might get an idea you were mixed up in it out of revenge for losin' your job."

"Why should be? I'm always out nights with the gang."

"Well, are you ready?" asked Morton impatiently.

"Sure," was the reply.

"Then here goes old Koop's printing office."

"Great Scott!" palpitated Fred, who had heard enough of the conversation to give him a pretty clear idea of what was in the wind. "The rascals are going to set the building afire. I must stop this."

He sprang forward with a bound just as Jude and Slatts applied the candle to the pile of paper and wood they had prepared for their nefarious purpose.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FIGHT IN THE CELLAR.

The paper blazed up, throwing a glare for several yards around.

The instant the young rascals had set it afire they started to leave the spot, only to find themselves confronted by Fred Towne.

They fell back with exclamations of consternation and surprise.

"So this is what you two are doing?" cried Fred, springing on top of the fire and trying to beat it out with his feet.

"You're a nice pair of rascals."

Morton was the first to recover his self-possession.

"Slug him, Jude. It's Towne. He'll give us away."

The speaker sprang on Fred and began to punch him.

Ferguson followed his example a moment later.

Fred found himself obliged to turn his attention to defending himself.

He had partially extinguished and scattered the burning pile of wood and paper.

The moment his attention was diverted from it, it took hold afresh and blazed up, soon throwing a bright light around the fighting boys.

Fred had his hands full with the two of them.

They were desperately in earnest in their endeavor to get the best of him, for they knew they were in his power, and this crime was a serious one.

Swat!

Fred's fist took Jude in the eye and he staggered back with a howl.

Biff!

He landed on Morton's jaw with a force that rattled Slatt's teeth.

Both, however, came at him again, and in trying to sidestep a blow from Ferguson's fist, Fred tripped over the cellar steps and went down on them.

Jude and Morton jumped on him at once, and, holding him down, tried to pound his face.

Morton was in the only available position to do any effective work, and Fred quickly grabbed him by the wrists and checkmated him.

"Get a stick and hit him on the head," cried Slatts to Ferguson.

Jude reached for a piece of wood and whacked Towne alongside the ear with it.

"Once more," said Morton.

"Do you mean to murder me?" cried Fred, who could not avoid Jude's onslaught.

"Will you swear not to give us away if we let up on you?" replied Slatts.

"No, I won't," answered Fred, suddenly upsetting Morton and rolling over on top of him.

"Hit him, Jude," cried Slatts. "He's got me down. Break his head."

Ferguson brought the stick down on Towne's head.

He tried to escape the blow, but did not wholly succeed.

It stunned him completely for the time being, and the young rascals, believing they had knocked him out, kicked the blazing wood and paper closer together and then, grabbing their victim, dragged him across the cellar and out into the yard, where they left him and ran away in the darkness.

They were hardly out of sight before Fred recovered.

He staggered on his feet and his first thoughts was for the fire.

He made his way into the cellar again, though his head was bleeding from a deep gash inflicted by Jude's blow, and, going over to the stairs where the blaze was beginning to assume dangerous proportions, he started in to extinguish it.

It was not an easy proposition he had on his hands.

The smoke half choked him, and he reeled around like a drunken boy.

The fire was getting the best of him in spite of his efforts, when fortunately Tom appeared with an officer.

Not seeing Fred, they looked in at the cellar window and saw the reflection of the growing blaze.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Tom. "The place is on fire."

They lost no time making their entrance and rushed over to where Fred, smoke-begrimed and bleeding, was fighting the fire.

"Why, Fred!" cried Tom.

"Help me put it out," gasped Towne, looking ready to drop.

Tom and the policeman, recognizing the seriousness of the situation, jumped in at once, and after a desperate struggle that lasted fifteen minutes they succeeded in turning the scale and putting out the fire.

As soon as the last of the lighted wood was reduced to a smoking mass, Fred fell against the stairs in a faint.

Tom and the policeman bore him into the yard, and Benedict endeavored to revive him while the officer returned to the cellar to make certain that the fire was wholly out.

Tom dashed some rain-water into Fred's face and that brought him to his senses.

"Gee! You look like a wreck, Fred. You've got a cut over your ear and another on the top of your head. How did you get them?"

"Ferguson hit me twice with a piece of wood."

"Ferguson!" exclaimed Tom in astonishment. "Where did you meet him?"

"In the cellar."

"You don't mean it."

"I do. The fellows we took for burglars were Jude and Morton. They started that blaze to burn out the printing office in revenge for their discharge."

"Go on!" cried Tom, almost incredulously.

"It's a fact. They heard us out here, and after you went off they came to the window to look out. I was hiding behind that barrel and they didn't notice me. When they went back I followed them, discovered what they were up to, and jumped in just as they started the blaze. They attacked me like a pair of savages, but I think I should have got the better of them only I fell over the stairs. That put me at a disadvantage, and Jude hit me twice with a stick while Morton held me down. Then they dragged me out here, left me and scooted."

"Well, I never thought those chaps were so bad. They'll be sent to a reformatory for this night's work."

When the policeman joined them, Fred told his story to him.

"This is a mighty serious matter for those young scamps," he said. "You must come with me to the station and tell your story to the officer in charge. He'll send a couple of men out to arrest them."

So Fred and Tom went with the policeman to the police station, about eight blocks away.

Fred repeated his story, which was supplemented by the evidence of Benedict and the officer.

A statement of the case was entered on the blotter, from which it was subsequently copied and enlarged upon by the reporters of the morning dailies, of which Leesburg boasted three, and duly appeared under appropriate scareheads on the following morning.

Fred and Tom volunteered to pilot the two policemen detailed to arrest Jude and Morton to the homes of the boys.

Before starting off, Fred had his head bandaged up at a neighboring drug store.

On reaching Gregg's house, one of the officers pounded loudly on the front door.

The family had long since retired, but the racket aroused the foreman of Koop's printery, and he opened an upper window and stuck his head out.

"What's the matter?" he asked in no pleasant tone, rather astonished to see a party of four below.

"Is Jude Ferguson in the house?" asked the officer.

"I don't know. What do you want with him?"

"I want to see him."

"You're a policeman, aren't you?" asked Gregg, beginning to suspect that his wife's brother had got himself into a scrape.



"I am."

"Has Jude been getting himself into trouble?" asked the foreman. "Did you come here to arrest him?"

"I did. Now, don't keep us waiting, but come down and let us in."

Gregg shut down the window, and in a few minutes he opened the front door.

"Jude is not home," he said. "I just looked in his room. You may go up if you insist on doing so."

"You are certain he's not in the house?" said the policeman.

"I am certain he's not in his room or my room. You can look the rest of the house over and convince yourself. He went out after supper and we haven't seen him since."

The two officers looked the house over, Gregg's own sleeping apartment excepted, while Fred and Tom remained in the background.

Jude was not found.

The party then left, but one of the policemen took up his post in the shadow of a building on the opposite side of the way to watch for the young rascal's return.

The rest went on to Morton's home.

Morton's father, a section-hand on the railroad, came to the door and said his son had not come home yet.

Recognizing the policeman, he, too, wanted to know if his boy had got into trouble.

He received no direct satisfaction other than that Slatts was wanted at the station-house.

The second policeman also took up a position to watch the Morton house, while Fred and Tom, having done all that was expected of them, left him and started for their homes.

"Jude and Slatts are up against it for fair," said Tom.

"They deserve all that's coming to them. If it hadn't been that we fortunately detected them entering the alley, Mr. Koop's printing office would have been burned down before this, and we and the other compositors, not to speak of the employees of the pressroom, would have been out of work."

"Yes, I guess we would," replied Tom. "I wonder if they realized that they were committing a very serious crime?"

"I should judge that they didn't care what they did so long as they got square with Mr. Koop."

"It is evident they drew a line at murder, at any rate, or they wouldn't have dragged you out of the cellar. It's my opinion that the officers won't catch them to-night. Ten chances to one they've left town, knowing that they'd be arrested as soon as you recovered your senses and informed on them."

Fred agreed with him, and soon afterward they parted company at Tom's door.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A STARTLING ENCOUNTER.

Tom Benedict was right when he said that Ferguson and Morton were not likely to be arrested that night, and that they had fled the town.

Next morning, when their respective families read the paper, they knew why the boys were wanted by the police.

Jude's sister nearly had hysterics over the disgrace that had fallen on her brother, to whose many failings she had for so long shut her eyes.

Gregg, in consideration of his wife's feelings, had little to say on the matter, but he thought a good deal, nevertheless.

He had suspected for some time that Jude was a bad boy and now he was sure of the fact.

Mr. Koop's first intimation that his property had been in danger was received from the morning paper.

After reading the story carefully, he went to the station-house for further particulars, but could get no more light there on the subject, so he called around to see Fred Towne.

Fred had already told a very exciting story of his night's adventure to the Valentines.

Eva had been much alarmed when she saw his head bandaged up after he came downstairs to breakfast.

He assured her that the gash would soon heal, and that it would amount to nothing.

When Mr. Koop called, about ten o'clock, he was invited into the little parlor and Fred was notified of his presence.

"Well, young man," said Mr. Koop, when Fred appeared, "it seems that you saved my printing office last night. I am under great obligations to you, and shall see that you are suitably rewarded."

"Tom Benedict and the police officer deserve as much credit

in the matter as I," replied Fred, who was not so selfish as to wish to take more than his share of commendation in the affair.

"Yes, I believe they rendered very valuable aid, but you were on hand all the time, and tried to extinguish the fire at the start, which no doubt you would have done had you not been attacked by the rascals. At any rate, your head gives evidence that you had a strenuous time of it before your companion and the policeman arrived on the scene. Under these circumstances I am of the opinion that I am more indebted to you than to the others. Now, I want you to tell me the whole story. I have only had the newspaper account, and the reporters usually exaggerate the facts."

Fred immediately told all that had taken place from the moment he and Tom left the gymnasium for home until they parted from the second policeman on watch for Morton.

Mr. Koop punctuated the story at intervals with approving nods, and when Fred had finished he once more expressed his thanks to the young printer.

"I have observed your attention to business and general faithfulness to my interests since you came to work for me," he said, which was an unusual acknowledgment on Mr. Koop's part, "and it has been my intention to advance you as fast as you deserved it. Now that you have rendered me such a special service, young man, I consider it my duty to present you with \$100, and to raise your wages."

"Thank you, sir," replied the delighted boy.

"You are getting \$6, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Hereafter your pay shall be \$9 until further notice. I will give you the \$100 to-morrow."

Thus speaking, Mr. Koop rose, put on his hat, and took his leave.

Tickled to death, Fred rushed into the dining-room to tell the Valentines of his good fortune.

"You see it all started with that silver dollar, Eva," he said. "I'm going to keep it as long as I live."

"You ought to have it framed," she answered with a laugh.

"Perhaps I will one of these days. It deserves a gold frame, for so far it's brought me in \$1,150 inside of a couple of months, not speaking of promotion at the office and two increases of wages."

"Do you really believe that dollar is responsible for all that?"

"Sure I do."

Eva smiled incredulously.

In her eyes it was only an ordinary dollar, and she did not credit it with any lucky features.

She believed Fred would have been just as lucky had he not got it.

Next morning Fred was the lion of the composing-room.

There was a bunch of Mr. Koop's employees around the door a few minutes before half-past seven, and when Fred appeared he was surrounded at once.

The men wanted to hear his story from his own lips, for they had all read about the matter in the papers, but Towne excused himself on the ground that the shop would open up in five minutes, and he couldn't possibly narrate the circumstances in that short time.

Ferguson and Morton were generally denounced, and everybody was sure their finish was in sight.

Fred was called into Mr. Koop's office in the course of the morning and the proprietor handed him five \$20 bills in fulfillment of his promise.

Mr. Koop also raised Tom from \$10 to \$12 a week.

Work was a little slack, anyway, in the composing-room.

Gregg looked to be in a bad humor all the morning, and the men were careful not to attract any unfavorable notice from him.

Two weeks later the Sunday-school Fred, Tom, Eva and Edith Clark attended gave its annual picnic, and the four wanted to attend it badly.

Eva, who worked in a military store, found that she would be able to get off for the day, but the other three were not so confident.

However, they agreed to wait on Mr. Gregg two days before the event, which was slated for Saturday, and ask his permission to go off that day.

Accordingly, on Thursday afternoon, just before closing time, Fred, Tom and Edith lined up before the foreman's desk and made their request.

Gregg grinned when he heard what they wanted.

He happened to be in good humor, as everything had gone off to his liking that day; and as there was not an over-



abundance of work in the office he saw a saving of nearly \$5 on the weekly payroll, so he told them they could go, and they could get their money Friday night.

This was very satisfactory to the young people, so they made their arrangements to attend the picnic.

It was to be held on a wooded island down the river, about ten miles from Leesburg, and a steamer had been engaged to take the Sunday-school scholars and their friends to the island and back.

Fred, with Eva looking her prettiest, and Tom, escorting Edith, who was got up regardless, arrived at the wharf in time to pick out the four best seats in the bow of the steamer, and in due time the boat, well crowded, left her dock and headed down the stream.

"Isn't this just too delightful for anything?" exclaimed Edith, as the musicians began to tune up their instruments near by.

"It's all to the good," replied Fred. "We've escaped a warm day's work in the office, and will have nothing to do but enjoy ourselves as much as we can."

"It's a cold day when I can't enjoy myself on an affair of this kind," chipped in Tom, with a cheerful grin.

"There's going to be dancing," said Eva. "And I do love to dance."

"With Fred," said Tom slyly.

"Oh, with anybody that's nice," replied Eva, with a deep blush.

"Well, how do I suit?" chuckled Tom.

"You will have to get Edith's permission first."

"Oh, come off! I'm not tied to her apron strings."

"Aren't you?" tittered Eva. "I thought you were her exclusive property."

"You did, eh? How about Fred and yourself? You nearly had a fit the day we went to Plainville and he fell through the hole in the closet."

Eva blushed to her hair, and Fred hastened to her rescue.

"Don't mind him, Eva," he said. "Tom is only teasing you."

The musicians now started up a popular air and about half the girls in their immediate vicinity began to hum the tune or sing the words.

When the music stopped the girls and boys resumed their chattering like a lot of magpies.

And thus the time was passed until the island was reached and all debarked and hurried to the grove.

There was a covered dancing platform in the center of the grove, and as soon as the musicians had established themselves in a small gallery at one end dancing was in order.

Fred, Tom and the girls stayed here till intermission for lunch, and after they had eaten the good things they brought with them they started for a stroll up the island, which was a long and narrow one.

It was almost entirely covered by trees, which grew very thick in some spots.

Therefore it was not hard for two couples, like the boys and their charmers, to get separated when one pair lagged behind the other.

Fred and Eva did not notice for some time that Tom and Edith had dropped out of sight.

When they did discover that they were alone they were some distance from the grove where most of the picnickers were, and nearly at the extremity of the island.

"Hello," said Fred at last, "we've lost Tom and Edith. We'd better sit down and wait for them to come up."

So they perched themselves on a big rock and resumed their conversation.

Suddenly a face was thrust out of the bushes behind them. It was a haggard-looking countenance, with two or three weeks' growth of beard.

A second hard-looking face followed, and the two men looked at the young people.

They stepped softly out of the bushes and advanced upon the unconscious couple.

Suddenly Fred and Eva were both seized by the men, who pressed a hand across their mouths, to prevent any outcry on their part.

Fred instantly recognized their assailants as Jim Harker and his friend Bill, the murderers of Abel Ashfield.

But that wasn't the only surprise the young people were treated to just then.

Two boys pushed their way out of the bushes and came forward.

Fred and Eva easily identified them as Jude Ferguson and Slatts Morton.

It was a disquieting situation for Fred, and a terrifying one for Eva.

What were these men, aided by Fred's personal enemies, going to do with them?

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE TABLES TURNED.

Fred, when he was first seized, had started to put up a struggle, but he soon discovered that Jim Harker had muscles of steel, and that he was practically powerless in his grip.

As for Eva, she could do nothing in the grasp of the man Bill.

Addressing Jude and Morton, Harker ordered them to each get hold of one of Fred's legs and help carry him off.

With grins of satisfaction they obeyed, and then Harker started with his prisoner for the bushes.

Bill followed with Eva, and in this order the procession moved off.

A short distance behind the fringe of bushes was a little creek, and in this creek lay a large catboat, her mast hidden among the trees.

The prisoners were carried on board the boat and into the cabin, where they were released, and the sliding door shut upon them after their captors had withdrawn.

There was a locker that looked like a lounge on either side of the cabin, and on one of these Fred had been placed, while Eva was left on the other.

As soon as their enemies went into the cockpit outside and shut the sliding door, Eva ran over to Fred and, throwing one arm around his neck, looked into his face.

"Do you think they will keep us on board this boat some time?" she asked anxiously.

"I guess that's their intention. In fact, judging from the sounds I hear, I am afraid that they propose to carry us away from the island right away."

"If they do that, Fred," said Eva nervously, "we'll not be able to get home. How could we get off the island if the steamer went off without us?"

"If that was all I expected to have to worry about in connection with this matter, I wouldn't feel a bit broken up, for I'd find a way to get off this island and take you with me."

"How could you if they left us here?"

"I can't explain now but I'd manage it somehow. We're in the river now. Do you hear them raising the sail?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, we're leaving the island, all right. What their next move will be is a matter of considerable interest to me. I wonder if we could find something in this cabin that would help us stand those rascals off? If we had a couple of stout pieces of wood that would answer for cudgels I think we could prevent those chaps from entering the cabin. The door is too narrow for them to make a combined rush. They can only get in one at a time. Now, a good club apiece, or even one club in my hands, would give them a whole lot of trouble. Look in that locker on the other side and see what's in it. I'll examine this one. Perhaps luck will stand by us."

"I don't know what you mean by a locker, Fred," said Eva.

"Why, the space under these lounges. See, there's a flap that lets down."

Fred suited the action to the word by opening the locker on which they had been sitting.

A thrill of satisfaction ran through the boy's nerves for the very first thing he saw was a revolver lying on top of a box.

He grabbed it up in a twinkling.

"This is fine!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't have asked anything better. Now I'll be able to stand them off in great shape, for every chamber is loaded with a half-ounce ball."

Eva was also greatly pleased that they had something to defend themselves with.

There was nothing else in the locker that was of any use to them.

"Well, let's look in the other. A knife would be better than nothing for you to help me out with," he said. "Nobody likes to run against one."

Fred opened the opposite locker and there, to his surprise, was another revolver, fully loaded like the other.

He had it out in a moment.

"Have you the nerve to use this, Eva?"

She looked at it doubtfully.



"Wouldn't you dare shoot if you thought my life was in danger?"

That appeal nerved her at once.

"Yes," she said resolutely. "I'd shoot every one of them sooner than let them harm you."

"Spoken like a brave little girl. Here, take it. It may not be necessary to shoot, for a person can put up a mighty good bluff with a cocked revolver that looks ready for business. We'll only shoot as a last resort. I think when we point them at our captors they'll be glad to leave us alone."

While they were planning to surprise their enemies the cat-boat, under the influence of a gentle breeze, was sailing down the river toward Plainville.

Jim Harker, who was the leading spirit on board, seemed to be in no hurry to enlighten his prisoners as to their ultimate fate.

Jude and Morton were conversing together, and they seemed to be greatly tickled at having Fred Towne in their power.

"This is where we'll take some of the starch out of him," said Ferguson.

"Bet your life we will," answered Morton. "We owe him a whole lot."

"Jim Harker owes him a whole lot, too, and he's goin' to make him sweat."

"We can look on and enjoy the fun. What do you s'pose he's goin' to do to him?"

"We can look on and enjoy the fun. What do you s'pose he's goin' to do to him?"

"I dunno; but I heard him say he's goin' to get square with him for eucherin' him and Bill out of the swag they got from the old miser's house."

"What a chump he was to turn all that over to the police! If you and me had found it, I'll bet we'd never have given up a cent. There was \$20,000 in money. Why, that would have carried us to New York, and given us no end of a swell time. Then we could have pawned the other stuff, which the papers said was worth \$10,000."

"Sure we could, if we'd been in Towne's shoes. I hain't heard that he ever got a cent for givin' the valise up. I'll bet the police made somethin' out of it."

"You can bet they did. The police ain't such wise guys, after all. Jim Harker and Bill Tweed has been hid on that island ever since they escaped from the mill, and the cops hain't troubled them even a little bit."

"Nor they haven't got onto us, either," interjected Ferguson gleefully. "As soon as Harker thinks it safe we'll all light out for Chicago. I guess we kin have a good time there, for Jim proposed to show us the ropes."

"I guess we can. Well, it's too bad that we didn't finish up Koop's office when we had the chance. It would have made a fine bonfire, and no one would have suspected us. I don't see how Towne happened to get onto us. It was rotten luck."

The boat was now nearing the creek that ran up to the old mill.

They soon steered into it, and the wind failing them, Harker worked up alongside the bank and sent the two boys ashore with a line to tow the cat-boat up to the mill.

It happened that Fred was watching all that was going on outside through a slit in the door slide.

The present moment looked propitious for him to make a sudden move.

Jude and Morton were on the bank and couldn't very well interfere in favor of their rascally associates.

Fred went to Eva and told her what he was going to do and what he expected of her.

"I hate to ask this of you, Eva, but I'm afraid if we don't do something effective right away these scoundrels may get the better of me; and if once they get me into the cellar of the mill they'll half kill me, even if they don't finish me entirely. I think you care for me, little girl, just as I care for you, and I am sure it would hurt you to have anything happen to me."

"Oh, Fred, Fred," she cried, throwing her arms around his neck and bursting into tears, "it would break my heart if you were injured by these men. I love you with all my heart, and I'll willingly die to save you."

She clung convulsively to him, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"And I love you very dearly, too, and will protect you with my life. Now, brace up and let us take the bull by the horns. With such men as they are we can't take any chances. I feel sure that we'll be justified in shooting them in order to save ourselves."

Eva dried her tears and promised to be brave.

Then Fred moved over to the slide, which was not fastened, followed by the girl.

He threw it open suddenly and stepped out into the cockpit before the rascals suspected anything was going to happen.

With a fierce imprecation, both men started to their feet and advanced toward Fred.

"Stop where you are and throw up your hands!" cried Fred, taking the revolver from under his jacket and covering Harker, while Eva, standing in the opening of the cabin entrance, aimed her gun at Bill.

To say that the rascals were thunderstruck and disconcerted would but faintly describe their consternation at that thrilling moment.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FRED GETS THE UPPER HAND OF HIS ENEMIES.

Jim Harker looked into the muzzle of the revolver and then at the resolute boy, who showed plainly that he meant business.

"Throw up your hands, both of you," repeated Fred. "If you think I don't mean to shoot, just take another step. I'm going to take no chances with you at all, so if you value your lives do as I tell you."

Reluctantly the men raised their arms—they couldn't help themselves.

"Come out, Eva," said Fred, "and get on the roof of the cabin."

She did so.

"Now cover the rascals while I get up beside you," he continued. "And if they make a move, don't hesitate to shoot."

Jude and Morton were by this time aware of what was going on in the boat, and were both surprised and alarmed when they saw the revolvers in the hands of the late prisoners.

Somehow or another it didn't occur to them to make a break for cover on their own account.

Probably they were too bewildered by the unexpected turn in affairs to think.

Fred sprang quickly onto the roof of the cabin and, facing the scoundrels, ordered them into the cabin.

Harker glared at him viciously.

If ever there was murder in a man's eyes it was in his at that moment.

And Bill looked as if he would not have hesitated to choke the life out of the boy if he could have got his fingers about his neck.

"Come, now, I've got you two dead to rights. Get into the cabin or take the consequences."

"You'll live to regret this, young fellow," said Harker darkly.

"I'll give you one minute to start yourselves," returned Fred, in a determined tone. "I know what I'm up against, and I'm not to be trifled with. I'm just in the mood to shoot you fellows, so take notice."

Jim Harker sullenly came forward and entered the cabin.

"Now you get in there, too," cried Fred to Bill.

The rascal obeyed very grudgingly.

"Keep your eye on those boys, Eva," said Fred, "and shoot them if they try to get away."

Fred sprang down into the cockpit and slammed the sliding door shut.

"Now, you Jude and Morton, come this way," said Fred, addressing them sharply.

They refused to budge.

"You'll do what I tell you or I'll put a ball into you," roared Towne.

"You wouldn't dare," snarled Jude.

Fred lost patience with them, and, raising the revolver, quickly fired, sending the ball close by their heads.

Jude fell and lay cowering on the ground.

"Oh, Fred!" cried Eva, "you've shot him."

"No, I haven't. Get up there, Jude, or the next time I'll fetch you in earnest."

Ferguson, trembling like an aspen leaf, got on his feet.

"Now, come this way at once," ordered Fred, "and hold on to that rope."

The boys, thoroughly cowed, no longer refused to do his bidding.

"Pull the bow of the boat around so it will head down the creek. Keep your eye on the cabin door, Eva. If those rascals open it, shoot."

The boat was soon turned around.

"Now, then, start off and haul her down to the river," said Fred.



Jude and Morton did not dare object, and they started off, rope in hand.

At length the boat reached the entrance to the river.

"Jump aboard, you chaps, by way of the bow, and hoist the sail," cried Fred to Jude and Morton.

They both hesitated to obey this order, for they had recovered their self-possession and were calculating on making their escape.

"I'll give you half a minute to do as I order you. If you hold off, I'll put a bullet through your leg or arm."

That settled the matter.

So they sprang aboard, one after the other, and hoisted the sail.

As we have already remarked, the breeze was quite light, and the cat-boat went along on her return course at no great speed.

"Sit down where you are and keep quiet," said Fred to Jude and his companion.

"Say, what are you goin' to do with us?" asked Morton.

"I think it's about time you two returned to Leesburg," replied Fred.

"We don't want to go there," objected Morton. "Put us ashore and we'll never trouble you any more."

"Shut up," replied Fred. "I've heard enough from you."

Morton turned to Jude and the two entered into a low conversation.

"Just keep your eye on them, Eva. They'll try to work some dodge if they can, and I don't mean to give them the opportunity if I can help it."

"What are you going to do, Fred?" asked the girl.

"I'm going to keep on up to the wharf where the steamboat is lying and have the captain of the boat take charge of these chaps."

At that moment the sliding door was pushed wide open and Jim Harker sprang out, closely followed by Bill.

Each held a bottle by the neck, and there was blood in their eyes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONCLUSION.

Seeing him in conversation with Eva, they thought they would be able to take him off his guard by a sudden rush.

They made a mistake, however, in the boy they were dealing with.

He was not off his guard a single instant, and the moment Harker sprang out at him he raised his revolver and deliberately fired at the ruffian.

Harker clapped his hand to his breast, and with a cry staggered and fell in his tracks.

"Now, you go back," said Fred to Bill, "or I'll give you a dose of the same medicine."

The rascal saw that he was at the boy's mercy, so he backed into the cabin and pulled the slide to again.

Eva had uttered a startled cry when Harker and his companion burst out on them, and another when Fred fired the shot that laid the murderer out.

"He brought it on himself," said Fred. "I simply had to fire. In another moment he would have brained me with that bottle."

"Do you think he will die?" asked the girl.

"I don't know whether he will or not; and if it wasn't that I don't like to have any man's blood on my hands, I wouldn't care. Such scoundrels are better in their graves than on earth, where their presence is a constant menace."

Jude and Morton had sprung to their feet when the men made their rush, and they were ready to jump in and help them as soon as they could do it without danger.

The shooting of Harker and the retreat of Bill convinced them that they had better not butt in, so they got well forward and hung on by the mast.

They saw that Fred was not going to stand any nonsense, and that he had nerve enough to shoot to kill, if necessary.

The shot and confusion on board the cat-boat attracted the attention of several of the picnic party on the island, and there was instantly great excitement alongshore.

Consequently, when Fred ran the boat alongside the steamer, there was a crowd of boys on hand to see what was the matter.

Towne called a deck-hand over.

"Will you tell the captain or the mate to come here. I've caught the murderers of Abel Ashfield."

The mate hurried off to see the captain, and presently that gentleman appeared.

Fred went over his story again.

The captain called up several of his hands and had the prisoners removed to the steamer, secured and placed in the hold, that is except Harker, who was so dangerously wounded that he was carried to one of the small staterooms and a superficial examination made of his wound.

He was made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, and a man sent off to a neighboring village to get a doctor to attend him.

The physician, when he arrived, extracted the ball and bound the wound up.

Two hours later the boat reached her wharf at Leesburg.

The police were summoned to take charge of the prisoners.

Jim Harker was removed to the station-house in an express wagon, and Fred and Eva had to go along with the party in order to give the police an account of the affair.

The town had offered a reward of \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Harker and Bill, and this was subsequently paid over to Fred.

Mr. George Ashfield had also offered a reward of \$5,000 for the same purpose, and Fred got that, too, after the rascals were tried and convicted.

Bill was allowed to turn State's evidence, and he got off with twenty years in the State prison, while Jim Harker was eventually executed for his crime.

Jude Ferguson and Morton were tried, convicted, and sent to a reformatory for a term of several years.

Mr. Koop seemed to have taken quite a fancy to Towne, and he was delighted to learn that the young firebugs had been captured through Fred's plucky efforts.

After their conviction he presented the young printer with a gold watch and chain, and assured him that he had a steady job in the office as long as he chose to stay there.

Fred continued to attend strictly to advancing himself in his business, and by the first of the following year he had improved so much that Mr. Koop advanced him to \$12 per week, which was as much as he paid a couple of his men jobbers.

The average pay his regular hands received was \$15, only one man getting \$16.

In the course of time one of the organizers of the International Typographical Union came to Leesburg and succeeded in establishing a union.

It led to a general strike in town for higher wages and shorter hours.

Nearly all of Koop's employees, including Fred and Tom, had joined the union, and as Mr. Koop refused to grant their demands they quit work.

Finally, one morning the papers announced the sudden death of Mr. Koop, from heart failure.

The widow tried to run the office, but did not find it a profitable job.

Fred heard that it was to be sold at public auction.

He immediately called on Mrs. Koop and made her an offer for the office, agreeing to pay \$5,000 down and the balance in certain equal payments covering several years.

His offer was accepted.

As soon as Fred got possession he notified his union that hereafter "Koop's Printing Office," the name of which he proposed to retain, would be a strictly union shop, and there was great rejoicing among the craft at the next meeting.

Fred put Tom in as foreman of his composing-room, hired as many of the old hands as would return as soon as trade warranted it, and started out to build up the business to its former proportions.

And he did build it up until every press in the house was running full time, and every job that he turned out bore the union label.

To-day "Koop's Printing House" is the largest, not only in Leesburg, but in that section of the State, and Fred Towne is considered one of the solid men of the town.

He has a fine residence on the suburbs, and it is hardly necessary to say that Eva is mistress of it.

Tom is superintendent of the entire business, and his home, which is not far from Fred's, is presided over by Edith, whose name once was Clark.

In a gold frame, hanging against the wall of Fred's library, is a large silver coin.

Both Fred and his wife would rather part with anything else in the house than that, for they regard it as their most valued possession, although it is Only a Dollar.

Next week's issue will contain "PRICE & CO., BOY BROKERS; OR, THE YOUNG TRADERS OF WALL STREET."

**SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE**



## CURRENT NEWS

The Berlin Lokal Anzeiger announces that the Berlin authorities have issued an order allowing each person a half pound of meat or fat weekly pending the issuance of meat cards.

William G. Atwater, of Meriden, Conn., celebrated his 102d birthday recently. He is in good health and says he owes his great longevity to the simple life. He never had a highball or smoked a cigarette in his life. He never used tobacco. His only dietetic weakness is a fondness for hasty pudding. Mr. Atwater has been a faithful member of the Baptist church since boyhood and reads the Bible daily. Ever since his majority every Democratic candidate for President has received his vote.

When fire destroyed the laundry of Joe Wha, Chinaman, at No. 142 Eighth avenue, Homestead, Pa., it failed to destroy the bank in which Joe had stored his savings. Residents of Homestead saw him digging through the ruins of his building after the fire, and a short time later saw him pull out an old pair of shoes. He uttered a cry of delight as he hurriedly reached into the shoes and produced a roll of bills from each. He had hidden \$400 in the shoes.

Jack Johnson, the ex-heavyweight champion of the world, has settled down in Spain, having opened a boxing academy in Madrid. It is reported that one of his distinguished patrons is King Alfonso. Johnson has had a couple of contests, too, both taking place at the Grand Theatre, Madrid, where he defeated Frank Crozier on March 10, and Arthur Gruhan, labelled the heavyweight champion of Spain, on March 25, the Spaniard being knocked out in the eleventh round.

Italy is short of lumber, on account of a great falling off in imports since the war, according to the newspaper *Il Sole* of Milan. As a result, it says, prices to the consumer are triple what they were before the war. Of the lumber imported into Italy during normal times, 77 per cent. came from Austria-Hungary and 12 per cent. from the United States. In 1915, during the months previous to the outbreak of war between Italy and Austria-Hungary, the imports from the former dwindled to almost nothing.

C. Spencer of Rockford Township, Kansas, knew there was a fairly new family of coyotes on his farm that fast were growing to the age of destructiveness. Recently he made a search for the den, and found it. The young coyotes inside heard their "enemy" on the outside, but could not put up a fight, so they retreated. When they were fast inside the

den Mr. Spencer walled up the exit and then began digging in from the top. With a spade he dug until he hit the animals, and then shot them to death. He took the scalps of eight young coyotes to the office of H. M. Barrett, County Clerk, where John Chain, Deputy, made out a check to him for \$8. The State pays a reward of \$1 per head for coyotes.

Some of the latest uses to which compressed air is being put are described by Harry Franklin Porter in the *Factory*. Among these are keeping cutting tools cool while working, blowing dirt and dust from machinery, removing lint from textile mills, raising the nap on heavy fabrics, finishing silk ribbons, polishing metal, forcing the water out of boiler tubes, testing piping for leaks, drying newly coopered barrels, drying yarn after dyeing, mixing paints and varnishes, blowing factory whistles, making a room fly-proof by a curtain of rushing air at the entrance, through which no winged thing can pass, and driving machine screws and nuts.

After preparing to make a coupling in the Pennsylvania yards, Altoona, Pa., Brakeman H. Ward Hall slipped from his car and the next instant his right foot was caught in a switch frog. He struggled to free himself, but could not. Then he tried frantically to save himself by signalling the engineer, who was pushing a train of twenty-four cars toward him, but the man on the locomotive could not see him. When members of his crew found him later, his right arm and right leg had been severed and he was pinned under a big steel car, but still conscious. Every car had run over him. He directed the work of the men who were rescuing him, and was rushed to the hospital, where he died four hours later.

Abraham Wilcox, of Fort Worth, Tex., 107 years old, died at the home of his son, Edward Wilcox, 606 West Tenth street, after two days' illness. Prior to that he had enjoyed good health all his life. Grandpa Wilcox, as he was familiarly called, had lived in Fort Worth three years. He came here when 104 from Mexico. Seventy-seven years ago he came to America from Devonshire, England. He lived in Rochester, N. Y., and later in Michigan, going to Mexico thirteen years ago. He maintained his age was 115 years, but relatives say this is incorrect. Three times a day it was his custom to drink a toddy. "I was lit up once eighty years ago," he said in his interview. "A man ought to be careful." While in Fort Worth he took a walk three times a day. Every Sunday morning found him at St. Andrews' Episcopal church. A son, 84 years old, lives in Michigan.



# HARRY, THE HUSTLER

OR

## THE BOY WHO WAS READY FOR BUSINESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

Dink kept his own council. He went directly out on the street, and as he was hurrying toward the "Poodle Dog" saloon, where he hoped to meet one of his fellow-councilmen—it was the man to whom he was indebted for the fraudulent plans—he ran into Ben Newman, another member of the board.

"Hello, Dink!" cried Newman. "You are just the very man I want to see. I was on the way to the 'Dog' to look for you. Come in here to Bates' and have a drink."

"No!" replied Dink, shaking his head. "I've got no time for that. If you have anything to say to me say it right here."

Ben Newman was the mayor's man, and he was also Wicks' man. Dink would as soon have thought of trusting him as he would a hungry coyote, and Newman knew it, too.

"You better listen to me if you feel any interest in them two fellers you have taken up with," he growled out, "that's all I've got to say."

"What two fellers?" retorted Dink, in a half-stupid way.

"Say, you don't seem to know nothin'!" cried Newman. "Don't I mean the little Yorker what did the lecture, of course, and the feller what he brung along with him to do the figgering?"

"Oh," said Dink. "Well, what about them?"

"I heard something. I won't tell you where nor from who. He got out of the operry house kinder suddint, didn't he?"

"Who's he?"

"Thunder! How dumblike you be. The Yorker, of course."

"Oh, yes! Well?"

"Well, I heard that there's a plot against him; that he and t'other feller has been captured and taken up to your new claim, and that they mean to do 'em there, so's there won't be no more interference with business in this hyar town."

"Oh!" said Dink. "Well, say, I'm obliged to you for telling me. It's straight goods, is it, Ben?"

"Betcher life! Will you go up thar and try to save him? I'll go along and help yer if you say the word."

"I'll go in the morning," replied Dink.

"But then it may be too late."

"Oh, that's all right. They won't dare to harm them two fellers; everybody knows that would mean a run-in with me."

"All right," said Newman. "I only thought I'd tell yer. I've been trying to help you in this business, Dink."

"Much obliged again," replied Dink, and he pulled away and walked hurriedly to the station.

He believed the story, for he had bought Ben Newman and paid for him. He believed also that Ben would be just as ready to sell out to the Bunce bunch if they happened to feel disposed to make it worth his while.

"This is a trap to catch me, too," said Dink to himself as he pushed on to the station. "I'll double on them, though. Let them wait and see."

Even while Ben Newman was talking, Dink's plans had been formed.

He had not the slightest intention of allowing Ben Newman to lead him by the nose. The division superintendent of the railroad was his friend, and from him he knew that he could get all the men he needed to help him.

Dink did not mean to lose one moment in following up the clue Ben Newman had given him, but his intention was to follow it up in his own way, and no other.

Looking behind him, he saw Ben making straight for the Poodle Dog, which was the hold-out of the grafters. This only seemed to confirm his suspicions. Dink felt that there was trouble ahead.

As he reached the station a train came in, and among those who stepped from the Pullman car was a tall, dignified-looking Englishman with a servant close behind him. There were several others in the party, all men of the same stripe.

The valet turned to Dink and asked him about transportation to the hotel.

"Me marster is Lud Tifton," he went on to say. "We are on our way to Deadwood to look up the mines. We have stopped over here to look up a man named Davis—Dink Davis. Perhaps you can tell us where he lives?"

"Lord Tifton!" gasped Dink. "You—I—oh, gee!"

He broke away from the valet and hurried up to the stiff-looking Britisher. "Lord Tifton! I am Dink Davis!" he exclaimed.

"You! Well! What about the diamond?" demanded "Me Lud," eagerly, at the same time dropping his voice.

"I have located it. I can get it for you. I——"

"Do so, then, and the two thousand pounds is yours. That diamond has been in my family for over two hundred years. If you can return it to me, Mr. Detective, you will put me under the deepest obligations, and I shall take pleasure in inspecting the mine you mentioned among the rest of those we have come out here to the Black Hills to look up."



"Come this way, my lord," said Dink. "You don't need carriages; it is but a few steps to the hotel."

It looked bad for Harry and Joe, for Dink Davis' attention had now been taken up with business of the utmost importance to himself.

Dink piloted his party to Hager's Opera House Hotel.

Several of the plotters saw him; Dink was right in business; they felt that their plan had failed.

Midnight came, and still there were those of the plotters watching the hotel, waiting for Dink to come out in order that means might be taken to lure him to his doom.

Down at the Poodle Dog the mayor was waiting in a private room.

At one o'clock Ben Newman came hurriedly in.

"Well?" demanded the mayor.

"He isn't in the hotel!" said Newman. "He and six fellers from the railroad have just left for Coyote Hill on horses. We are dished, I reckon."

"Not much," replied the mayor. "Get to the telephone, Newman. Call up the Twin Brothers' mine. All you need say is Dink."

It was a deep-laid plot to down the obnoxious councilman, and Ben Newman, who had sold out to a third side if there had been one, hurried to the phone, and, getting his man at the other end of the wire, said "Dink."

Meanwhile, Harry, without the least notion of the doing of the plotters or the doings of Dink, who was certainly his only friend in Dodgetown, was hustling for himself.

The first thing he did was to listen long and attentively to the sounds in the room below.

He soon came to understand that Joe Jump, the half-breed, and the man Grid were playing poker and drinking whisky.

This was certainly favorable for uninterrupted hustling on his part, so Harry went right to work.

Although both the boys had been carefully searched before they were left to themselves in the loft, and everything of any value taken from them, the searchers had left Harry two sets of weapons, the value of which they probably never once thought of.

We refer to his teeth.

Harry was blessed with good, sound ones, too, and when with great difficulty he managed to roll over against Joe and went to work on his bonds, the young German considered the job as good as done.

"Thunder! That's great!" he whispered. "Why didn't I think of it? I believe you can gnaw those cords through."

"Of course I can," breathed Harry. "Just you give me time and don't say anything. It will be your turn next."

"It don't have to. I've got a knife."

"You don't mean it? I thought they skinned you of everything, same as they did me?"

"It was in my vest pocket; there happened to be a hole there, and it slipped down into the lining. It's there yet if I can only get at it. How long is it going to take?"

"Don't know. It will take forever if you keep interrupting me. Just let me alone, Joe, and I'll finish up the job as quickly as ever I can."

But the best he could do was half an hour, owing

to the strained position he had to occupy in order to get at the rope.

It parted then, and Joe, with a grunt of satisfaction, announced that his arms were free.

"Softly, now," whispered Harry. "Get at your knife if you can. Trouble is, the least movement we make is dead sure to be heard downstairs."

Inside of two minutes both the boys were free.

Still the card talk continued in the room below.

Harry got on his hands and knees and crept cautiously toward the window in the gable end of the loft, through which the moonlight came streaming.

The sash was closed, but Harry managed to raise it and get a stick under it without making much noise.

"Right," he muttered, as he looked down and saw how perfectly easy it was going to be to drop to the ground.

He held up his hand and motioned to Joe to come over.

Then, without difficulty, or arousing the least suspicion of their movements, the boys dropped to the ground.

Here they stood, breathlessly listening for a moment.

The poker game was still in full progress, and Harry felt that their game was as good as won.

Besides the loghouse there was a rude shafthouse near, built above the prospect hole which Dink Davis had sunk on his new claim.

Beyond the shafthouse was a roughly-built barn, and Harry, pointing silently toward it, led the way there.

Two excellent bronchos were hitched in the stalls, and there were the saddles and bridles hanging from pegs driven into a post.

The boys lost no time in saddling the horses, and then led them out into the open.

Harry was not much on horseback riding, and had some difficulty in mounting.

Joe gave him a boost, and a moment later they went dashing past the hut and down the mountain trail, plainly distinguishable in the moonlight.

The instant the clattering hoofs sounded Joe Jump and Grid were out of the hut.

"Hold on, thar, you two, or you are as good as dead!" yelled Grid.

"Good-by!" shouted Harry.

Both ducked, and the revolver shots flew harmlessly over their heads while they went dashing down the trail.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CONCLUSION.

Deprived of their horses, Grid and Joe Jump were powerless to do anything to interfere with the flight of the fugitives.

They did not try. As soon as they realized the situation they returned to the hut, picked up their few belongings, and left the place by another trail.

As it afterward came out, these two men were in the employ of Dink Davis, and had sold out to the enemy.

(To be continued.)



## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

### CAT ADOPTS CHICKENS.

On the same day that several young kittens disappeared from the home of Peter Nelson, Manistee, Mich., leaving a prostrated mother cat, a hen at the same place abandoned a brood of five newly hatched chickens. Nelson placed the chickens with the cat. For days the old cat has cared for the chicks with all conceivable devotion. She washes and caresses them and becomes savage when one approaches threateningly near her adopted brood.

### BONES IN INDIAN MOUND.

Human bones, so old that they crumbled at the touch of a spade, were unearthed in an Indian mound five miles from Edwardsville, Ill., by Hugh Pong, whose farm includes five mounds. The bones crumbled when they were exposed to the air, and it was impossible to distinguish the shapes of any except some skulls and arm and leg bones. The bones were piled in a heap, and for that reason it probably will be impossible to excavate any complete skeletons.

### RID FARMS OF SASSAFRAS.

Farmers of East Christian, Ky., are using goats to rid their farms of sassafras bushes. The bushes often overrun a field, growing up so thickly as to prevent cultivation.

F. M. Harned is the originator of the plan to curb the bushes. He has eradicated sassafras altogether from his farm with a herd of fifty goats. His neighbors followed his example.

A herd of goats will live comfortably through a winter in a field where sassafras is growing. They graze the tender plants close to the ground and eat the buds and tender leaves out of the larger plants as well as peeling them of bark. When spring comes the field is usually clean of the bushes, the constant eating of the bud of the bush having killed it even down to the roots. Cutting them out with an axe will not prove effective, for the roots then remain alive and the plant grows again.

Some strange stories are told of how the goats operate to get the buds out of the top of bushes which have attained considerable height. A farmer is authority for the story that the goats will work in pairs in such cases, one rearing up on the bush, bending it over until the other goat can reach the bud and bite it out.

### MAY LOSE HOT WELLS.

Citizens of Boise, Idaho, who for the past quarter of a century have taken special pride in their natural hot water for the heating of houses, public buildings and business blocks, have just been made to realize that this unique treasure hangs on a slender thread.

Slight earthquake tremors were felt in this vi-

cinity recently, and investigation made since by experts in the interest of the water company lays bare the ever present possibility of the total loss of the hot artesian flow or a tremendous increase as the result of the next tremor or shock.

Twenty years ago a well in Hull's Gulch, a few miles above Boise, was spouting forth a lusty stream of water boiling hot. Later, when pumps were installed in the wells on the bench just outside the city limits to increase the supply of hot water for city consumption this well in Hull's Gulch, a few miles away, quit flowing altogether.

It remained thus dormant all these years until the earthquake shock was felt in the fall. Since then it has been spouting as of old, while there has been no decrease noted in the flow of the wells lower down. The accepted theory has been that these wells are all fed from the same stream, and that this stream is thrown out from some tremendous subterranean cauldron far below the surface of the earth.

Scientists differ as to the source of the heat. By some it is attributed to internal gases. Others adhere to the theory of radio-activity.

### RICHEST POOR FARM.

The most remarkable "poor farm" in the United States, if not in the world, gives Providence, R. I., a distinction about which little is known.

It is the Dexter Asylum, located in the midst of wealth and fashion. More exclusive in its solitary state, behind substantial walls, than any other estate on the East Side.

For nearly eighty-eight years there has been a continuous procession of living "freemen" of Providence, or their descendants, who had "settlements" within these plantations, to the unique institution behind the \$12,600 stone wall that it took the city eight years to build. Upward of 2,500 have lived and died behind those gray walls, and more than 9,000 have been cared for out of the "Dexter donation" and the beneficence of the city of Providence—cared for in a manner befitting a charitable people and in strictest conformance with the will of Ebenezer Knight Dexter, who bequeathed this now most valuable property out of "a strong attachment to my native town," "an ardent desire to ameliorate the condition of the poor" and "to contribute to their comfort and relief," "in fee simple forever," the "Neck Farm" in question and various other properties, most of which the city still holds.

The value of the "Neck Farm" at the time it was devised and bequeathed to the city of Providence for the benefit of her poor was in the neighborhood of \$2,500, it is claimed, but its assessed valuation to-day, with the other properties remaining in the estate, is close to \$850,000.



# HAL, THE POOR BOY

OR

## THE ADVENTURES OF TWO ORPHANS

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"Strip! Take off your clothes!" said a keeper, who stood near. "Be quick about it, or they will be torn off your back!"

It did not take the two orphan boys long to get out of their poor garments.

To have merely looked at Terry's emaciated form should have touched a heart of stone.

But the keepers of the convict camp were not that sort.

The dreadful system which was responsible for their existence had thoroughly hardened them.

As a matter of fact, they were worse than brutes.

A queer contrivance, like a cooper's horse, was now brought up.

Over this Hal was ordered to bend his body.

Captain Brower took out one of the branding-irons from the furnace and held it up close to his cheek.

"This is hot enough," he said. "Hold him, boys!"

Four keepers sprang to obey.

Two seized Hal, each by an arm, and held him firmly down against the wooden horse.

The other two dropped on their hands and knees, catching Hal by the ankles, pulling his legs apart.

In this position it was simply impossible for the boy to move.

"Ready!" called a keeper.

Hal set his teeth firmly.

"May I die if they get a sound out of me," he resolved.

Captain Brower took the branding-iron and pressed it against Hal's naked back, burning out the impression of the large letter "M."

Not a sound from Hal.

Of course, his body contracted under the terrible pain. Who could help it?

This was all, so far as Hal was concerned, but poor Terry, overcome with fright, fell in a dead faint.

"Huh! This fellow has grit!" exclaimed Captain Brower. "T'other one keeled over, hey? Well, pick him up and hold him on the horse. I can't break my back, stooping down to brand him on the ground."

Hal turned away.

He could bear it all himself, but it made him sick to see poor Terry thus tortured.

"I'm glad he fainted," he said to himself. "Now he won't feel it. This is terrible. I'm afraid he won't stand it long."

Hal's back was most painful, but nothing was

done to relieve him, when the simple application of a little grease would have allayed the pain.

"Twenty-eight!" cried Captain Brower. "Take 'em away. Bring up them two niggahs what come last night. May as well burn 'em, too, while I'm 'bout it."

Terry had revived, and was moaning piteously.

Led by two keepers, the boys were taken to one of the whitewashed shanties which stood over against the high paling surrounding the prison pen.

"That's your house," said the young keeper to Hal. "You'll find a few others inside there, and you will have to make the best shift you can for the night."

"Don't we get our clothes?" asked Hal.

"No; you'll get the convict suits. I'll send them down presently. Let me take your measure. Don't believe I've got any for the little feller hyar. Your numbers will be onto the backs of yer coats, and them's yer names from this on. You'll get along all right here, providin' you don't start in to make any trouble, but if you do you will be strung up naked by the thumbs and be licked within an inch of yer life, so be careful!"

Hal was silent.

It was no time for argument.

The keeper left them at the door of the shanty.

"No one allowed outside after the bell rings," he said. "See the men in the towers around the fence? Waal, them's the guards. There's a 'lectric light throwed out after the bell rings, and if they see any feller on the grounds till the rising bell rings in the morning, they shoot. Them's the rules of the camp, so govern yourself accordingly, young fellers. Now, good-night."

"Good-night."

What a horrible mockery the words were.

The shanty was a mere shelter, built close to the paling, but not touching it.

Inside in the darkness, the boys could see six figures stretched out on the bare ground, for there was no floor and no seat of any sort.

All wore the striped uniform of the convict camp.

As far as any signs of life went, all might have been asleep, for none of them spoke or moved.

Terry clung to Hal, who stood just inside the open door, wondering what he ought to do.

"You'd better come inside, you uns," spoke a voice from the floor. "If the patrol comes along and sees you thar in the doorway after the bell strikes, you'll get the whip, and it's going to strike right now."



Clang! Clang! Clang!

The words were scarcely spoken, when a deep-toned gong clanged out.

"In with you! In with you!" called another voice. "Lie down on the ground! You'll have to make the best of it! You'll not get any clothes to-night!"

Hal dropped down on the hard earth, drawing Terry down with him.

"Keep close to me," he whispered. "Try and stop that noise. It will make trouble, sure."

"Oh, Hal! Oh, Hal!" groaned Terry. "Oh, I want to die!"

"No, you don't want to do anything of the sort!" called out the voice which had last spoken. "They all say that when they are brung in hyar fust off. But life is sweet, and thar's always a chance of escaping. Take it easy, you fellers, and don't make no more noise than you have to. We want to sleep, for we've got a blamed hard day's work ahead of us, and this here is our only chance to get any rest."

"We won't make you any trouble," said Hal. "We will be quiet, sir."

"Don't sir me. We are all alike hyar. I'm 2186, in for life, for killing the worst man who ever lived. They call me the boss of the shanty, and my orders is that you make no more talk."

A long silence followed. Some of the convicts on the floor began to snore.

Terry was too frightened even to moan with the pain he felt.

Hal drew the poor little fellow as close to him as possible, for the night was turning off cold, and Terry was trembling from head to foot.

"Surely they won't be so inhuman as to leave us here without clothes," thought Hal; but that was just what happened.

Probably they had been forgotten, but at all events no one came near the shanty as time crept on.

"Midnight! All is well!" a loud voice shouted outside at last.

"Midnight! All is well!"

Further along the cry rang out.

Again and again it was repeated.

Somebody rolled over against Hal.

It was the next convict on the floor on the other side of him.

"Am yo' 'sleep!" he whispered.

"Colored," thought Hal, as he answered: "No."

"Them's the guards in dem towers 'round de fence. Say, be yo' very cold?"

"It isn't so much me as it is this poor boy I am holding in my arms. I'm afraid he will get his death."

"It's tough. Dey left me naked a whole day when I fust come in. Say, don't speak loud. Ef de boss hears us, he'll lick de stuffin' outer me, but I'm pulling off my breeches an' my coat. Put 'em onto him quiet ez yo' can. It won't hurt me none to lie in my shirt. I is used ter dis yere an' he hain't. Wish to gracious I had suffin' ter give yo',"

"Thank you a thousand times!" breathed Hal. "Who are you?"

"Oh, say," was the reply, "we hain't nobody hyar. I used ter be Quash 'fo' dey ketched me gwine fo' chickens, now I'se 2024. Hyar yo' be. Put dem onto de po' lil white boy. He won't mind dey bein' off niggah legs, he's so cold."

And a pair of trousers and a jacket were passed into Hal's hands.

He helped Terry put them on, thanking 2024 warmly.

Then, taking the shivering boy in his arms again, Hal settled down to put in the remainder of this dreadful night the best he could.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IN THE SWAMP.

Hal North never forgot that dreadful night.

Morning came at last.

As the gray of dawn crept over the convict camp, the colored boy—he proved to be nothing but a boy—asked to have his clothes given back to him, explaining that he was liable to be whipped half to death if he appeared without his convict's uniform when the roll was called.

The convicts in the shanty, when the bell clanged again, all sprang to their feet, and, passing outside, ranged themselves in line at a distance of some ten feet from the door.

Hal and Terry did not go.

"Stay where you are, you boys," ordered the boss, a big, rough fellow, whom Hal found later to have been a tramp from the North. "If they don't provide you with clothes, it hain't your fault. You have no call to stand up naked at the roll call."

So the boys remained in the shanty, but within a few minutes the young keeper, Jack Blunt by name, came in with the two suits of convicts' clothes, two pairs of shoes, but no stockings, a coarse shirt for each, and a cap.

"Put these on," he ordered, gruffly, and without offering a word of explanation as to why they had not been brought before.

The boys hurried on their clothes, which were really better than the ones they had lost.

Upon the back of Hal's coat, in big figures, was the number 2222.

Terry's number was 2223.

These were the only names by which the boys were to be known while they remained in the convict camp.

Hal and Terry now took their places in the line.

All around the prison pen, before each shanty, similar lines of convicts were drawn.

Before each line stood a guard with a rifle.

At length, Captain Brower appeared, mounted upon a black horse.

He had a book in his hand, and began calling numbers in a loud voice.

(To be continued.)



## TIMELY TOPICS

Electric wheel chairs similar to those employed at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition last year are being used successfully in Europe for the wounded and crippled soldiers. Invariably the convalescent men prefer to direct their own chairs than to have some one push them about. One of these chairs, which is of Swiss make and costs but a small sum, is equipped with a one-quarter horsepower motor suspended between the steering and rear wheels. Current is supplied from a battery of fifteen lead plate cells housed in three boxes beneath the seat. The battery is of 50 ampere-hour capacity and provides sufficient energy for a run of thirty to forty miles. Five forward and five reverse speeds are provided. The steering and operating mechanism is of the very simplest.

Dowager Queen Elisabeth of Rumania, whose recent death is mourned by thousands of admirers of her character and writings as outlined under the pen name of "Carmen Sylva," was a lover of the tales of James Fenimore Cooper. This fact became known through an enthusiastic appreciation of Cooper that Carmen Sylva expressed in a letter to a friend. The Queen was asked in 1907 whether she would be willing to send a brief message to the people of Cooperstown, N. Y., upon the occasion of the village centennial. Her answer took a pleasing form. It consisted of a large photograph of herself, below which the Queen inscribed the following: "Our hearts are full of love for the great poet, our childhood's dearest friend. We can never thank him enough for all the joy he gave us. Elisabeth, 'Carmen Sylva.'" The portrait shows a beautiful woman with kind, attractive expression; her hair is snow white, and about her neck is a rope of pearls. The picture is now in the museum at Cooperstown.

An Italian non-commissioned officer of engineers has invented a special telemeter for anti-aircraft guns, whose aim is automatically rendered practically unerring. For obvious reasons a detailed description of this wonderful device, which has been adopted in all the allied armies, cannot be given. It consists of a mirror attached to the gun in which the object fired at, aeroplane or airship, is reflected in such a way that the gunner is enabled not only to determine automatically the distance between the gun and the target, but to calculate the speed of the aircraft. The mirror is graduated so that the distance and the speed of the target can be ascertained at a glance, and no time or ammunition is lost. Provided the enemy aircraft is within firing range, and the range of the anti-aircraft gun has been considerably increased of late, the chances of its being missed when the special telemeter is used are reduced to less than 1 per cent. Three out of five sea-

planes were brought down during a recent air raid at Ancona and about eight Austrian aeroplanes were hit and destroyed or captured a few weeks ago at the front.

Owing to the demand for admission to the junior camp at Plattsburg by boys under eighteen years old, a sub-junior camp for lads between fifteen and eighteen years old will be opened at Fort Terry, on Plum Island, Long Island Sound. The course will extend from July 6 to August 10, and will be conducted on precisely similar lines to the Plattsburg camp, under the supervision of Regular Army officers. Although this Fort Terry camp is a recent development, already enrollments have been received from the following high schools: Montclair, Glen Ridge, New Rochelle, Yonkers, Englewood, Erasmus, Manual Training, Regis, Hartford, Dalton, Hughes and Mount Vernon, and from such private schools as Lawrenceville, Virginia Military Academy, St. Paul's, Andover, Newark Academy, Polytechnic and Worcester Academy. Another camp for school boys will also be held in New York State. It will be located at the Infantry School of Application at Peekskill and will be conducted by National Guard officers. High school boys are eligible to attend. The camp will be open from August 9 to September 9, and boys can spend the entire four weeks there or take a two weeks' course.

The derailment of railway trains by wind is not an uncommon occurrence in the case of light, narrow-gauge railways. Mr. R. H. Curtis, writing in Symons' Meteorological Magazine, tells how this danger has been virtually eliminated on one such line; viz., a stretch of 36 miles along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, forming part of the West Clare Railway. Probably there is no other line in the British Isles exposed to such violent gales, and during a few years prior to 1909 as many as five "blow-offs" occurred, in which the carriages were completely smashed though there was fortunately no loss of life. In that year Mr. Curtis devised for the railway a pressure-tube anemometer, with electrical apparatus for giving two warnings by ringing a bell in the station-master's house at Quilty; the first when the velocity of the wind reached 65 miles an hour and the second when it reached 85 miles an hour. When the first warning is given, 2,400 pounds of movable ballast, kept for the purpose at every station, is placed on each vehicle of any train on the line at the first station it reaches. When the second signal is given, trains are stopped until the storm abates. Since the apparatus was installed, in December, 1908, there has been only one storm-derailment, and this was due to deliberate disregard of the signals.



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## Good Current News Articles

When men, women and children on their way to church the other evening walked into a swarm of bees at one of the principal corners of Georgetown, Del., more or less excitement ensued. Many of the would-be churchgoers went no further but right-about faced and hastened homeward. Others, unharmed, proceeded to church. The bees swarmed on the sidewalk and in the dusk of the twilight could not be seen until pedestrians stepped among them.

The two-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Foist of Anderson, Ind., may die, doctors believe, because the lad stood on his head nearly two hours in a hole two feet deep and a foot in diameter. The mother missed the boy and searched half an hour about the house and yard. Finally she found the lad with his feet upright in a large posthole in a corner of the yard. When Mrs. Foist took the boy from the hole he was unconscious. Doctors worked for two hours in efforts to revive him. Attendants think he will die on account of a number of ruptured blood-vessels in his head.

The will of Col. Henry D. Borup, who died May 26 last, was filed recently. After arranging for the disposal of many military and Arctic relics it specifies that should Donald B. MacMillan, now in the Arctic at the head of the Crocker Land Expedition, bring back with him a large boulder and a small stone, they shall be placed, the one at the head and the other at the foot of the grave of George Borup, son of Col. Borup, who accompanied Rear-Admiral Peary on his successful North Pole hunt. The will further provides that the bell of the Roosevelt, the polar ship, shall be melted and cast into a name plate to be set in the largest stone.

A well situated on the bluffs that have been sliding toward the Missouri Pacific tracks in the lower yards, near the Kerford rock crushers, has moved 20 feet with the slide, but remains in good con-

dition, and is being used regularly. Changing location has not harmed the rock walls of the well, or diminished the supply of water. This well is now about 60 feet from the Missouri Pacific tracks, says the Atchison Globe, which are well toward the bottom of the bluff. It has been explained to a reporter that the river bluff at the Kerford quarry rests on a strata of soapstone, which forms an incline of about 45 degrees, and that the slide is caused by heavy rains soaking through the soil and striking the soapstone surface, which becomes very slippery when damp, and permits the bluff to slide toward the Missouri River. In other words, the present trouble down there is due more to defective drainage on the hillside than to the encroachment of the Missouri River.

## Grins and Chuckles

Yeast—Do you have to ask consent of your wife when you want to go out at night? Crimsonbeak—Well, if I do, and silence gives consent, I never get it.

"Now, Johnny," said the teacher, "if you had six pennies and Charlie had four, and you took his and put them to yours, what would that make?" "Trouble."

Artist (angrily)—No; I tell you I don't want a model. I only paint flowers and fruit. Model (sweetly)—That's all right. Every one says I'm a peach.

Miss Parvenu (just home from abroad)—There we saw the Venus de Milo. She was very lovely, but she had no arms. Miss Geraldine Parvenu (who stayed at home)—Did you look on the door of her coach?

"When you proposed to me you said you were not worthy of me!" "Well, what of that?" "Nothing; only I will say for you that whatever else you were, you were no liar."

Miss Prism—Don't let your dog bite me, little boy. Little Boy—He won't bite, ma'am. Miss Prism—But he's showing his teeth. Little Boy (with pride)—Certainly he is, ma'am; and if you had as good teeth as he has you'd show 'em, too.

Teacher—Now, James, do you understand the meaning of the word "extinct?" James—Yes'm. Teacher—Then name one bird that is now extinct. James—Chipper. Teacher—Chipper? What kind of a bird is that? James—My pet pigeon. The cat got him this morning.

Little Bertha was invited out to dinner with her father and mother. Before she went, however, it was firmly impressed upon her mind that she must not speak unless spoken to. All went smoothly for a while; but when some time elapsed and no notice was taken of her she began to get uneasy. Finally the hostess, seeing something was wrong, asked her what she would like next. "I should like to have you begin to ask me questions," was the polite reply.



## THE MYSTERY OF HARLEM CAVE

By Col. Ralph Fenton

The coast of New England is one chain of rugged, broken rocks. Many of them tower up into miniature mountains, on which the stunted pine, where sufficient earth has accumulated, manages to take root and eke out an existence.

Dark caverns perforate the huge rocks and bluffs, in which the sea, with its endless roar, rushes in and out with each ebbing and flowing of the tide.

Many years ago there was a little seacoast town, situated cozily among the rocks and bluffs, just back from a small harbor, accessible in calm weather, but impossible to reach during a storm. The little hamlet bore the name of its founder, Harlem, and boasted at one time of five or six hundred inhabitants. Many of its citizens were enthusiastic as to the hamlet in the near future growing to a city.

The principal occupation of the villagers was fishing. The coast was too rough and broken to think of cultivation, even had it possessed soil. In most places it presented nought but sharp-pointed, rugged rocks, against which the sea constantly lashed itself into foam.

One evening the little hamlet was thrown into a little flutter of excitement by the approach of a vessel. A vessel seldom visited this lonely spot; not more than twice a year, to bring provisions, and take cargo of dried and smoked herring.

The fisheries were quite extensive, and furnished employment for all the villagers.

When the good ship Dolphin entered the narrow, crooked channel that led to the small bay, and there dropped anchor, the entire village was congregated on the beach to welcome captain and crew.

The skipper, a fine, whole-souled fellow past middle age, descended to his gig and was rowed ashore. Many of the citizens crowded about him to grasp his hand, and welcome him to the hamlet again.

"I am glad that you have come, captain," said Joseph Carnue on that evening, as he sat behind the counter of his store, and the captain in front. "Not only because I wanted a fresh stock of goods, but because we have a mystery here, which we need year clear head to help solve."

"A mystery—what sort of a mystery?" asked the captain.

"A very dangerous one," replied the merchant. "Our citizens are disappearing one by one, and there is a prospect soon of the village being depopulated." The merchant turned deathly pale as he spoke.

"Disappear—how do they disappear? What becomes of them?" asked the captain.

"That we do not know. 'Tis that we want you to find out for us."

"Can you not guess? Have you no surmise?"

"Yes, we all have our theories, but none are satisfactory. The most seemingly improbable is the most generally accepted."

"What is it?"

"That there is some devil, or monster animal, inhabiting Harlem Cave which devours them one by one. Such a strong hold has this story got upon the people, that they will scarcely go near the cave."

"How long has this been going on?" asked Captain Jones of Mr. Carnue.

"For nearly a year."

"I heard nothing of it on my other voyage."

"Because our people were not so horrified then as now. It had just begun. First Tom Saunders disappeared and was never seen again. Then Joel Lamasters left his family one morning never to return. Silas Flynn was a third, and so on until at least a dozen have mysteriously disappeared."

While speaking a customer came in the store. He was nearly a middle-aged man, with a gray eye that at times was quiet, and at others blazed with the fury of a demon. He was always quiet and unassuming.

Joseph Carnue kept a general stock of all kinds of goods. His store was as much an apothecary shop as a grocery, and as much a dry goods as a hardware store. He kept a small stock calculated to supply the demands of his various customers.

The strange, quiet man purchased a few chemicals and left without another word.

"Do you know him?" asked Captain Jones.

"He is a mysterious man who lives in a small cottage on the hill. His name is Hargus. What he does no one knows. He seldom comes to the village, and when he does, nearly always purchases chemicals and retires without a word."

While the captain was still conversing with the merchant, a man entered, his face pale and almost too much agitated to speak.

"What is the matter now, Bundy?" asked the merchant.

"My son Walter has disappeared; he was last seen near Harlem Cave, and has doubtless gone as all others have," was the reply.

"Have you instituted a search?" asked the merchant.

"The men are getting ready once more, but we have no hope."

"Do you search the great cave?" asked the captain.

"Only a part of the way. It is so infested with poisonous gases that no man dare more than enter it."

"There is some strange mystery here," said Captain Jones, "which must be ferreted out."

He accordingly sent to his vessel for his first mate, Harlan Swetnam, and six men, determined, if possible, to discover what strange plague had seized the island.

Mr. Bundy was almost frantic, and in spite of the expostulations of friends, rushed down to the cavern, into its dark mouth, never again to return.

Captain Jones was not only a thorough seaman, but a scientist as well. He had made chemistry, then in its infancy, his hobby, and often when they lay becalmed he put together various acids and compounds to test experiments.

"I am determined to go to that cavern," he finally declared to Mr. Carnue, the merchant. "I will assure you that there exists no poisonous gases there that cannot be driven out. To be otherwise would be contrary to the laws of nature. I will discover what originated the gases and assure you they can be burnt up."

The citizens did all they could to dissuade Captain



Jones from so fatal an undertaking, but he was determined.

"Heave ahead, capen," said Swetnam, the mate, "and may I be blowed if you don't find us with sails trimmed close in your wake."

Sailors are naturally superstitious, but they never refuse to follow where their captain leads. Several citizens accompanied Captain Jones and his men to the cavern. Here the sailors provided themselves with torches, a sledge-hammer or two, each a pair of pistols, and the captain with some sulphur, sugar saltpeter, and various other chemicals to be used if needed.

The broad entrance narrowed down until they came to an aperture so narrow that but one man could barely squeeze through at a time. At last they came to where a broad, flat stone barred further progress altogether. Placing his face here, the captain caught a strong odor, not of poisonous gases, but chloroform.

"This is not natural," he said, as he inhaled the sickening odor. "There is some one who gets up this artificial gas to frighten persons from visiting the interior of the cavern."

He spoke a few words of encouragement to his men, and then, with the aid of Mr. Swetnam, the mate, the large flat stone was removed.

"Come on," shouted the captain, and they dashed into a large underground chamber so strongly filled with the narcotic odor that they were forced to hold their breath. By the light of their torches they beheld a strong wooden door. Feeling sure that he was near to a solution of the mystery that had threatened the depopulation of the village, the captain seized the sledge from the hands of a sailor, and with two or three blows from his strong arms knocked the wooden door from its hinges.

A strong current of air swept from within, almost extinguishing their torches, but not quite.

The men, who were nearly suffocated from the close room and disagreeable odor, felt refreshed by the sudden breeze, as they termed it.

Holding his torch above his head, Captain Jones entered the inner chamber, followed by the mate Swetnam, and the other sailors close at his heels.

A crash and wild, piercing cry came from a dark corner. This inner chamber seemed to have been dug out of the earth, as it was propped up by large beams of wood, and above their heads was a network of cordage and ropes.

A frightful figure started up from the dark corner, where a table had been upset, and, with wild screams, started toward them. He was an old man, sixty years of age, with hair and beard of a frightful length, his arms bare to the shoulders, and his eyes gleaming with rage.

"Away, away; curses on you!" he cried. "Have you tracked me here at last? Do you think to be my death?"

He sprang forward at the captain's throat, but was seized by the mate and sailors, who held him fast.

Near the upturned table was a decanter, a flask, and a large amount of English gold coin.

There were various chemical preparations, and a large chaldron in the apartment, with some rude furniture.

Having made the prisoner fast, the captain continued his search, and, entering another apartment, found a cowering wretch with his face bowed in his hands.

To his horror he discovered, hanging on the wall, six or seven grinning skeletons.

The second man, when seized, proved to be none other than Elijah Hargus, the mysterious chemist of the village.

He was dragged forth with the other strange being, who had evidently not seen the light of day for years.

No sooner was the old man dragged into the presence of the villagers than he was seized with a fit, from which he died in a few minutes.

The cavern was explored, and the grinning skeletons in the interior chamber were, without doubt, the bones of the missing friends.

The dead bodies of Mr. Bundy and son were also discovered, each having died of strangulation, rather than suffocation from poisonous gases, as was at first supposed.

Hargus was confined that night in the village jail.

Over one hundred thousand pounds in gold was discovered in the chamber where the old man was captured.

On Hargus depended an explanation of the mystery.

It was several weeks before he confessed, and when his story was told, it was as follows:

His name was not Hargus, but Sampson. The old man captured, and who died in a fit, was his father. They had both been sailors, his father being second mate, and he but a boy many years before, on a ship from Liverpool to New York. On the way, his father and a sailor named Bill Hulse conspired to kill the captain and crew, and seize the immense amount of gold supposed to be on board.

They did so, murdering all in their sleep one night, and running the ship near Harlem Cave, they took everything they desired from it and scuttled it.

Conveying the treasure to the cavern, they had fixed up the inner apartments as they were found, conveying their treasure to them. Neither of the three dared to go into the civilized world, but lived a miserable life of seclusion.

In a quarrel Sampson's father killed Hulse, and they preserved the skeleton. Elijah, the young man, had, before going to sea with his father, studied medicine, and it was his strange whim that led them to preserve the skeletons of their victims.

When the village sprang up about them, they hoped by silently killing all who came about the cave to break up the settlement and preserve their secret. The son, building a cabin upon earth, acted as a spy for his wicked father. Their lives had been as miserable as the guilty usually are, but they were caught at last.

Elijah Sampson was convicted of murder and hanged. Though Harlem was but a small hamlet and its inhabitants not wealthy, they made up a nice present to Captain Jones, who, by his bravery, had discovered the most remarkable and dangerous mystery ever known on the New England coast.

"Our cook gives us the same thing at every meal." "What does she give you?" "Indigestion."



## FROM ALL POINTS

The Japanese Navy Department has issued specifications for a new battleship which, according to press advices from Tokio, call for a main battery of twelve 15-inch guns; displacement, 32,000 tons, and a speed of twenty-four knots. The new super-dreadnought is also to have an improved defense against submarines.

Under date of March 28 the President of Paraguay issued a decree providing for the study of English in the national colleges, to be given the same importance as the other prescribed studies and the teachers to receive the same salaries as those of other branches. The president bases his action upon the recognized value of learning English and "in conformity with the recommendation adopted by the recent Pan-American Scientific Congress in Washington." Years ago English was taught in the colleges of Paraguay, but was superseded by German.

Miss Anna Mannion, of Toledo, Ohio, in moderate circumstances at one time, is wealthy now through the sale of a mine. Her father, Michael Mannion, a prospector, died four years ago. The bulk of his estate was the St. John group of mining claims near Sugar Loaf, considered worthless. Recently attorneys for the State appeared in the County Court and filed a petition probating the will, which had been lying in the court files. The object is to clear the St. John groups title for sale, tungsten running 15 to 20 per cent. having been found there. A Boulder operator has offered \$50,000 for the property.

Frederick T. Barber and some friends were driving toward Anderson, Ind., in Mr. Barber's new automobile recently when the car was attacked by a large red bull. The bull struck the automobile with such force that one of the doors was stove in and the rear fender of the car was bent. The bull was standing in an open lane when the automobile approached. When it saw the car it suddenly made a dash toward it, striking it amidships. The persons in the automobile were frightened, but escaped injury. The bull did not seem hurt and appeared to be glaring defiance at the machine as it walked away.

Two large mountain lions, a male and female, invaded the northwestern section of Denver, Col., the other morning, attacked two persons, and greatly alarmed residents of that section. The animals are still at large and a squad of police armed with rifles is seeking them. While standing in her back yard Mrs. F. J. Carlin of West Twenty-fifth avenue was

horror-stricken when a lion leaped the fence and started toward her. She fled toward the house, reaching the door a few feet ahead of the lion, and slammed it shut. The other person attacked was J. H. Hubbard of West Twenty-fifth avenue and Meade street. While picketing out a cow he encountered the two lions and fled. When last seen the lions were making for the foothills seven miles away.

The high price of waste paper caused by the general rise recently in price of paper stock is adding substantially to the funds of the Board of Education and of the Teachers' Benevolent Association, St. Louis, Mo. The teachers' fund is being added to from the sale of old newspapers brought to school each day by the children, while the Board of Education gets the proceeds of the sale of the waste paper picked up in the schoolrooms at the close of each day. Since the date when the children were asked to begin bringing a newspaper a day to school the schools have sold old newspapers at an average of 47 cents a hundred pounds. At this rate the value of the paper collected in about two weeks would be nearly \$400.

There is no closed season for alligators in Texas and the sport is always open to the hunter of big game. A quartet of young people from Rockport had a thrilling experience in landing one about fifteen miles west of the city at Tule Lake, while at a picnic planned in honor of Mrs. Horace Wood of Los Angeles, Cal., who is visiting her mother, Mrs. T. A. Owens. The others were Miss Erma Ernest, Ransome Owens and Louis Almey of Arkansas Pass. Tule Lake is a wild, swampy place, overgrown with canebrakes, and has always been the habitat of alligators, but they are seldom seen except in dry seasons. Tracks were found about noon and the chase began. Wading in the slippery swamp and climbing through the brakes, was no child's play, but the hunters' instinct was strong and finally led them to a hole in a dry mound. The men dug down about four feet, when the spades struck the quarry snugly tucked away in its underground refuge. A royal battle ensued, while the alligator thrashed about, bellowing like a wild bull, and the ladies screamed with excitement. A rope was dropped down and locked around the massive jaws and then the alligator, measuring eight feet and three inches, was brought to the surface. Naturally it resisted and there was a wild skirmish to conquer and tie it to the farm wagon, behind which they dragged it home. Like the proverbial white elephant, they don't know what to do with it, but the alligator is on exhibition at the Owens ranch.



## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### FIND INDIAN RELICS.

On land that has been farmed for thirty years, John Thelin, a member of the Board of County Commissioners, found a couple of Indian relics which reflect the industry of the red men of the past. Two stones were picked up on what is known as the Saunders land, near Devil's Lake, N. D., now owned by Thelin, where just a year ago relics of the same nature were found. The stones were shaped for use probably as mallets, with a groove around the centre which would permit a handle being attached.

### ELECTRICALLY HEATED GLOVES FOR AVIATORS.

A British firm has recently introduced a line of electrically heated gloves for aviators. Cold hands and feet are among the prime discomforts experienced by airmen flying at high altitudes, and it is obvious that numbed hands in particular may lead to disaster. Ordinary gloves, irrespective of their thickness, are of little use. The electrically heated gloves, on the other hand, maintain the hands at a comfortable temperature. As in the instance of the electrically heated gloves for automobile drivers, electrical connection is made between small brass disks on the gloves and metal plates on the steering wheel of the aircraft.

### MONEY MACHINE FAILS.

Isaac Deutsch and Myer Katz of West Frankfort, Ill., are facing trial on a charge of operating a confidence game brought by Anton Sorchych of Depue, Ill., who claims Deutsch and Katz sold him a machine to make \$20 bills, he paying them \$5,000 for the outfit.

According to Sorchych, the machine was to be operated by placing a \$20 bill in an aperture and turning a crank. Scores of duplicate certificates came forth. Three thousand were "made" in two weeks. Armed with a shotgun, he is said to have guarded his machine for three days after the men left. He then discovered the device would not work without more bills and brought suit.

### ALASKA GLACIER RETREATS.

Fifteen years ago a member of the United States Geological Survey mapped the front of the Barry Glacier, which is in the northwest corner of Prince William Sound, Alaska. In 1910 it was found that the front of the glacier had gone back about three miles from the position it occupied in 1899. B. L. Johnson, of the Geological Survey, examined the front of Barry Glacier in the fall of 1914, and determined that the total retreat of the glacier between 1910 and 1914 appeared to be about 8,200 feet, a retreat of four and one-half miles in fifteen years. A

short account of the retreat of this glacier includes a sketch map showing the position of the glacier front in seven different years and several reproductions of photographs of the glacier.

### NEW USE FOR MAPS.

A recent writer in "The Survey" describes the latest contribution to the "keeping of children on the farm" movement. In the country schools of Sauk County, Wis., the children make an inventory of the agricultural investment of the townships in which they live, and each special feature is represented on a topographic map. The results are "cow maps," "corn maps" and a census of farm machinery and farm and home conveniences. In this extensive as well as intensive educational work, which together constitute a social survey of the county, the topographic maps of the United States Geological Survey are used as base maps on which to plat the special information gathered. In their use of these maps the school children obtain new ideas of geography and of the real significance of maps.

### POLICE MILITARY CAMP.

The Police Department camp at Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, was opened on May 27. Three thousand members of the department have volunteered to take up the practical military training after hearing lectures on the subject all winter. Three hundred men will attend each camp, which will last two weeks. The work will be under the direction of Police Department officers of rank, supervised by army officers.

Time spent at the camp will not be taken from the policemen's vacations. As each squad leaves for the camp Commissioner Woods will send men from the training school to fill out each precinct's forces. The two weeks' camping will cost \$12.

Those who take the training will live the life of a regular. They will turn out at 5:45 each morning and turn in at 10:30 p. m. The day's schedule includes motorcycle and bicycle military instruction, motor vehicle identification, machine gun instruction, post graduate course in signalling and boxing and jiu-jitsu.

Each delegation must pitch its camp and on the last day strike camp and return tents and equipment.

"While the work will be held to schedule," the Commissioner said yesterday, "there will be time for recreation. A bathing beach fronts the camp grounds and the roads in the vicinity are the best in the State. Concerts will be given every Sunday for the campers and their families and friends. The camp will close September 29.



# THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

## DREYFUS' SON HONORED.

The following citation has recently appeared in the Journal Officiel and refers to the son of Major Alfred Dreyfus, who is a Second Lieutenant in an artillery regiment:

"Pierre Dreyfus, at the front since the beginning of the war, particularly distinguished himself on February 26, 27 and 28, 1916, by assuming, during these three days, a service of observation and liaison under most perilous conditions, after having requested not to be relieved during this period to avoid the risk of disturbing the continuity of the service during a critical phase. Throughout the days of February and March, 1916, he has remained constantly upon his battery's position, thus insuring a particularly active service of the guns under an almost continuous bombardment from the enemy artillery."

## BOYS GET THE DRUG HABIT.

Kansas schoolboys have contracted the drug habit. The combined energies of Governor Arthur Capper and his prohibition cohorts will be required to "save the boy" from this awful habit.

The St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette relates:

All cities in Kansas of the first and second class have been asked by Dr. S. J. Crumbine, of the State board of health, to pass ordinances prohibiting the sale of the dried leaves of the loco weed and the mescal button under heavy penalties.

Dr. Crumbine took this action to curtail the sale of these "drugs" until a law can be formulated.

He intends to ask that a State law be passed absolutely prohibiting the importation of either weed into Kansas. Recently there has been considerable complaint from police officers over the State that youths were eating loco weed and mescal buttons which have an effect similar to that produced by narcotics. It is said the two "drugs" were introduced into the State by Mexicans.

## OWNS ONE-FOURTH OF THE LAND OF THE EARTH.

"Until my recent visit to England I do not think I realized, nor do I believe the majority of Americans realized, the immense size, wealth and power of Great Britain," said Allyn Williams, of London, president of the Royal Society of Miniature Painters, at the New Willard, according to "The Washington Post." "This war has shown us this: England in size corresponds with the District of Columbia. It is only the seat of government for Great Britain, in the same way that the District of Columbia is the central seat of government for the United States.

"Great Britain owns more than one-fourth of the

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land of the earth; she is by far the greatest ocean-carrying nation in the world, and therefore controls the seas; and although she was caught totally unprepared for this great war, yet not a square inch of her territory has been invaded by her enemies. She has captured the greater part of Germany's great colonies and has within sixteen months raised a volunteer army of more than 3,500,000 men, all of whom are well paid. Personally, I believe in conscription; all who can bear arms should be compelled to serve their country. Slackers should not be allowed to escape service."

## WHAT MAKES IT HAIL?

There are certain important localities in the world where crops are blighted annually by heavy hailstorms, and scientists laboring to ascertain the cause have found out that it is due entirely to electricity in the clouds. Accordingly, a Frenchman has invented what is called a "Niagara electric," in order to discharge from the clouds the fluid which they contain.

The apparatus has to be installed on the top of a tower of a very high chimney, as if it were a lightning-rod. It has copper points united by bands of the same metal. The conjunction of points and bands meet another copper band which is under the soil and in contact with a deposit of water. By this means the atmospheric electricity is drawn down.

The practical value of the instrument is on the way to being universally recognized, writes a member of the French Academy of Sciences, who witnessed an experiment conducted on the top of Eiffel Tower. Almost at the top of the tower was mounted the group of copper points of the "Niagara electric" which met together in the form of an enormous snake, and extended to another band of pure copper which was directed to the soil. It is expected to be a year or two before the practical value of the system will be accorded the honorable position of the lightning-rod.



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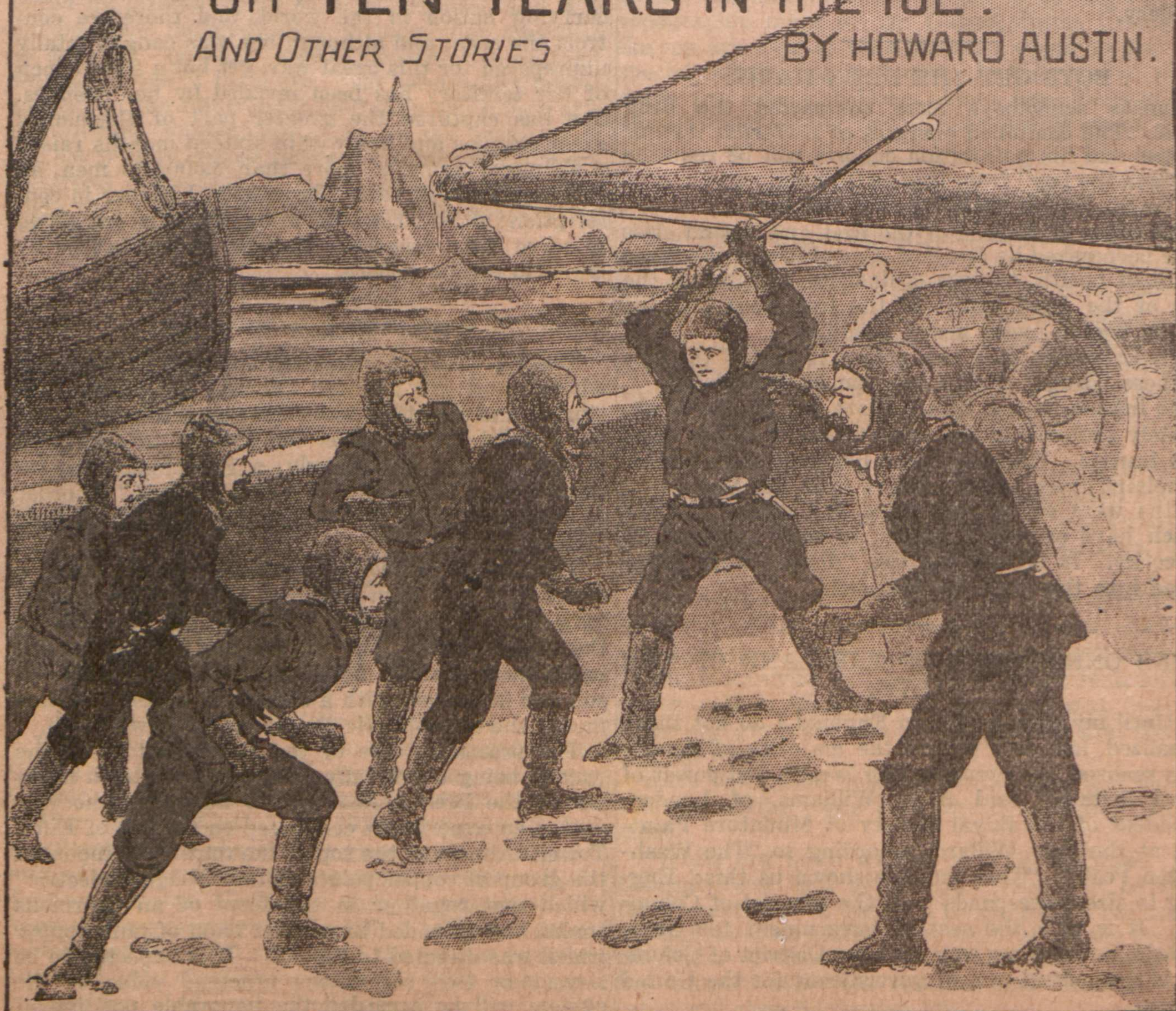
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 514 The Ladder of Fame; or, From Office Boy to Senator.  
 515 On the Square; or, The Success of an Honest Boy.  
 516 After a Fortune; or, The Pluckiest Boy in the West.  
 517 Winning the Dollars; or, The Young Wonder of Wall Street.  
 518 Making His Mark; or, The Boy Who Became President.  
 519 Heir to a Million; or, The Boy Who Was Born Lucky.  
 520 Lost in the Andes; or, The Treasure of the Buried City.  
 521 On His Mettle; or, A Plucky Boy in Wall Street.  
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 532 On to Success; or, The Boy Who Got Ahead.  
 533 An Eye to Business; or, The Boy Who Was Not Asleep.  
 534 Tipped by the Ticker; or, An Ambitious Boy in Wall Street.  
 535 Money to Burn; or, The Shrewdest Boy in Wall Street.  
 536 A Bid for a Fortune; or, A Country Boy in Wall Street.  
 537 Bound to Rise; or, Fighting His Way to Success.  
 538 Out for the Dollars; or, A Smart Boy in Wall Street.  
 539 For Fame and Fortune; or, The Boy Who Won Both.  
 540 A Wall Street Winner; or, Making a Mint of Money.

541 The Road to Wealth; or, The Boy Who Found It Out.  
 542 On the Wing; or, The Young Mercury of Wall Street.  
 543 A Chase for a Fortune; or, The Boy Who Hustled.  
 544 Juggling with the Market; or, The Boy Who Made It Pay.  
 545 Cast Adrift; or, The Luck of a Homeless Boy.  
 546 Playing the Market; or, A Keen Boy in Wall Street.  
 547 A Pot of Money; or, The Legacy of a Lucky Boy.  
 548 From Rags to Riches; or, A Lucky Wall Street Messenger.  
 549 On His Merits; or, The Smartest Boy Alive.  
 550 Trapping the Brokers; or, A Game Wall Street Boy.  
 551 A Million in Gold; or, The Treasure of Santa Cruz.  
 552 Bound to Make Money; or, From the West to Wall Street.  
 553 The Boy Magnate; or, Making Baseball Pay.  
 554 Making Money; or, A Wall Street Messenger's Luck.  
 555 A Harvest of Gold; or, The Buried Treasure of Coral Island.  
 556 On the Curb; or, Beating the Wall Street Brokers.  
 557 A Freak of Fortune; or, The Boy Who Struck Luck.  
 558 The Prince of Wall Street; or, A Big Deal for Big Money.  
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